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ZZAP! 64

ISSUE 25 MAY 1987

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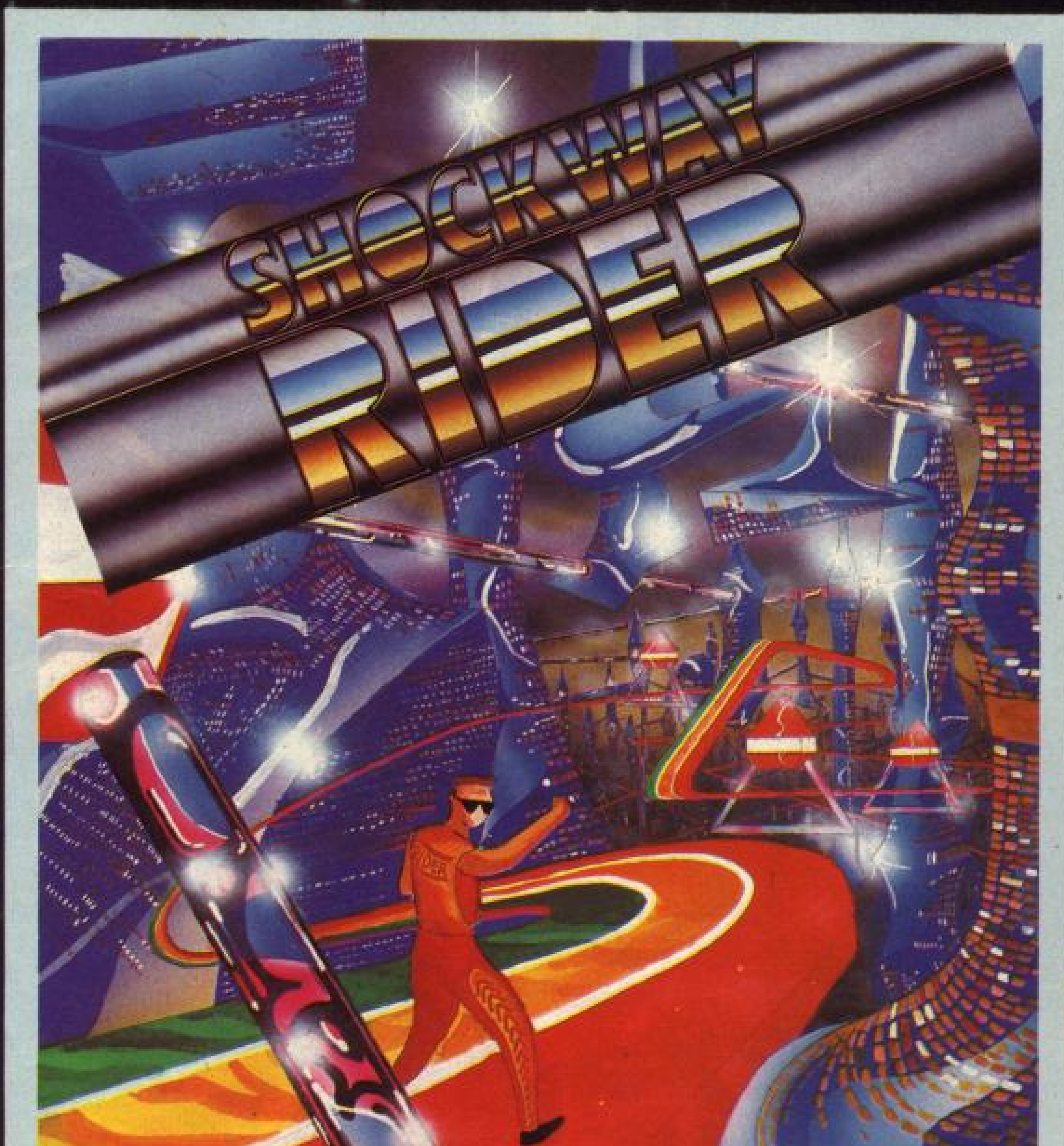
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The next issue of ZZAP! goes on sale from May 14th – it's yours for the buying, of that there's no denying . . .


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ONCE MORE FROM THE TOP . . .



It's about time we blew our own trumpet . . . the latest available ABC figures show that ZZAP! 64's sales have risen to an average of 67,728 per month – and they're still climbing! We're not going to rest on our laurels though, over the next few months we'll be introducing a host of new and exciting features. There'll be regular articles on hardware and programming (with a novel twist) – plus the reappearance of the strategy section. Other future attractions include a variety of unusual, but relevant, in-depth features – starting next month with a look at what tie-ins have to offer. By overwhelming popular demand, Terminal Man will also be back as of next month, joining Tamara Knight to provide further diversity. But don't just accept these changes, help us to continue improving your favourite Commodore magazine by filling in and returning the questionnaire on page 35.

And if you're worried about a decline in standards – don't be. ZZAP! 64 will still be ZZAP! 64, but with a little extra – we're still dedicated to the Commodore 64 software scene, and will be covering games software in our usual thorough, informative and unbeatable way.

Over the past couple of months we've been working on a system which will allow us to have more colour screen shots – as you may have noticed, this issue has more than its fair share. Who knows – before long we may well have the first ever full colour issue of ZZAP!

Next month's issue will cost £1.50, instead of the usual pound. But before you start rushing out to cancel your order from the newsagent, this is a one-off increase – to cover the costs of including a cover-mounted cassette. This little extra will include playable demos of forthcoming releases from some of the major software houses – well worth an extra 50p!

Sorry about the lack of the Compunet Page this month (normal service resumed next issue), and sorry about the non-appearance of Phillipa's strategy column (a small problem with her disk drive) – but if you have any complaints about this or anything else in ZZAP!, then put pen (or typewriter ribbon) to paper and let us know. We're here to help each other. Have a good read . . .

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ZZAP! RRAP

It's another 'Points Of View' special this month, with two large chunks of letters revolving around the thorny questions of licensed games and whatever happened to the ZZAP! Sizzler. In between there's some comment about this, that and the other (although not too much about the other).

One very good piece of news is that Those Who Rule the Towers have generously allowed me to raise the price of getting it right, so as from now, the Letter Of the Month wins its writer not £20 worth of software of their choice, but and amazing £30 worth! I'm astounded – hope you are. You can say 'thank you' later. For now – here is the Letter Of The Month.

PARANOID

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear Lloyd,
I suspect I'm probably one of many in that unfortunate position of being born a little too early, way back in 1962 – yes, that makes me a 25-year-old (practically a coffin dodger), time-served welder with a mortgage who likes nothing better than a couple of rounds of *Leaderboard*.

Anyway, things are getting so that I'm feeling more and more paranoid about owning a computer. It's little things like standing in W H Smith with a tenner clutched in my sweaty hand looking over the available software with an unusual anticipation and being surrounded by ki . . . er, young adults? The relief I feel when someone slightly more advanced in years approaches, is substantial. Arguably, the worst moment, though, must be the purchase. Just picture it, queuing up, head and shoulders above the average punter, shuffling my feet and feeling rather uncomfortable as I hand in my cassette box for a game called *Zoids* – I mean, 'When will this boy grow up?' seems to say the look on the girls's face behind the counter.

Another favourite pastime is the one where you try explaining to your non-convert girlfriend – 'Look, we can't go for a beer 'cos I've spent my last tenner on *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*.' Always good for a nark that one!! Take heed, readers, it happens to us all sooner or later.

Wayne Smith, Bromborough, Wirral, Merseyside

You're much too sensitive, Wayne! How do you think Mick Jagger must feel, pouting and gyrating at 45 ?!

Anyway, for your comments included elsewhere in this month's Rrap, and to make your life just that tiny bit easier, I'm giving you Letter of the Month status – and the increased £30 worth of software of your own choice.

LM

MULTI-LOADS

Dear ZZAP!
Just a few points about some recent games. First, *Super Cycle*.

Recently you have pointed out the awkwardness of many multi-load games on tape but *Super Cycle* is undoubtedly one of the most awkward I have yet experienced. For example, the time taken to load each section is almost as long as the time given to play. And worse, even before you get to the actual game you have to load up the main program, which takes a long time and is incredibly irritating if it decides to crash. It's a pity that no-one reviewed the cassette version, because I doubt you would have thought so highly of it despite the quality of the graphics and gameplay.

Secondly, *World Games*, another multi-load, is not quite so bad but for a few annoying details. The 'Travelogue' is a pain, simply because you can't just let the game load and walk away from it, because it stops loading and won't continue until someone presses the joystick button. Also, when practising if you should accidentally choose 'NO' to stop playing, you lose the game and have to reload, whereas on previous games if this happened it went straight to the menu and you could return to the game instantly. Apart from those few irritations it's a damn good game, although personally I think *Summer Games II* is just that bit classier.

Thirdly, presentation. I must say that I agree wholeheartedly with the editorial in the March issue of ZZAP!, but I must also say that I'm a sucker for good presentation. I know this is not the most important part of a game but I find messy presentation both irritating and frustrating. Awkward lettering can be a real pain (as in *Parallax*) and cluttered indistinguishable symbols (as in *Iridis Alpha*) only make a game harder to get into. Odin and Palace though, are two companies who seem to take pride in presenting their games as attractively as possible, *Heartland* and *Antiriad* being two fine examples.

Just one more point: I am just a little peeved at one of the programmers of the *Star Trek* game referring to it as 'a crappy American Series'. Well I can only say that the game will almost definitely lack any heart or feel for the subject if that's what one of its makers thinks. Okay, so *Star Trek* was a bit tacky, but it was made 20 years ago, and there's no doubting that the quality of the stories deteriorated as the series went along. But *Star Trek* at its best was packed with imagination – something, as you know, current software sorely lacks.

Eamonn Cleary, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, Northern Ireland

Agreed, multi-load games can and do prove a pain – although I didn't think that the Super Cycle *multi-load was that bad. Software houses should take a bit more care and put a little more thought into multi-load systems. But consider this:* Super Cycle *and* World Games *were written for disk ONLY. Now, would you rather go without than put up with a relatively minor irritation in the form of multi-load?*

As for Star Trek, *taken out of context, the programmer's remark may seem a little tactless, to say the least. I regard the programmes as having been essential. But I agree that they slid downhill fast by the third series. Nevertheless, a goldmine of game ideas.*

LM

TOO MUCH

Dear Lloyd,
The advert in the April Issue (24) for a reset switch costing £4.99 is far too expensive. My local computer shop, Cavendish Commodore Centre, sells reset switches for only £2.50. The telephone number for this superstore is (0533) 550993.

Simon Hynard, Stoneygate, Leicester

Thank you for the information Simon. If Cavendish Commodore Centre enjoy a huge profit on sales of reset switches, perhaps they would care to make a small donation to the Lloyd Mangram Summer Holiday Fund . . .

LM

IN A BIND

Dear ZZAP!
I'm writing to you on the subject of ZZAP! 64 Binders. I've been collecting ZZAP! since Issue One. On a cold Sunday morning about two weeks ago I was working out my finances and found I had enough money to get three binders. Brilliant, I thought, as I looked over at my cabinet and saw my ZZAP!s neatly stocked. Without further ado I sent away for three binders.

When they arrived I opened the terrible packing (how it arrived in one piece is a miracle) and gazed with delight. My excitement was short lived. I put my magazines in with great difficulty because they hardly fitted in, and many were so tightly packed they became creased and crumpled.

Well that was devastating as I had cared for them since the early days of Bob Wade. Now to my disappointment I find that many issues are savaged, even though I put them in with great care and with the help of my mum.

Maybe if you redesigned them it would make a lot people more willing to purchase your binders.
Neal Long, Hook, Hants

There aren't many designs of magazine binder from which to choose, Neal, and over the years we've found these to be the most suitable. It's true that as they fill up, the binders are harder to handle, but the strings do pull out and loosen fractionally if you tug at them, making it easier to slip the opened magazine through. Perhaps the most serious problem is that our paper is easily damaged, so you do have to take care in sliding them through. Also, the binders are designed to take 12 average thickness ZZAP!s, but if we have three issues at the end of the year which are thicker than calculated, then there's a bit more of a problem in fitting them in! However, we've got CRASH issues going back to the year dot, and they've been in binders for ages, in continual use, and still appear to be in reasonable condition.
LM



KEYBOARD AND 128 TO SUPPORT

Dear Lloyd,
During June of last year I purchased a Commodore 128 which I think has got to be the best home computer on the market. It has full 128K memory, enhanced graphics and sound chips, plus built in reset switch and a superb keyboard. But, I emphasise the but, where the hell is the software for it?

All we've had is *Kik Start* and *The Last V8*, which weren't bad, but then again, nothing to shout about. Take a game like *Space Harrier* – now that was poor on the 64, flickery graphics plus a totally unplayable game – but can you imagine it on the 128? Enhanced sound and graphics being used to the full. The game would be brilliant.

Another area is adventures. Adventures would shine in a new light on the 128, wouldn't they, with the full 128 memory as opposed to the limiting 64K. Graphics could go into every location without the programmer worrying about the memory running out.

There are dozens of games that fall into this class. But the software manufacturers aren't taking any notice of this great machine and its capabilities. I've heard manufacturers come up with the usual line that they're not going to support a machine, when not enough units have been sold. But if they started producing good games for the 128 then more units *would* be sold. The 128 has got potential to be a great games machine, but it's taken the software industry a long time to recognise this.

So all I can say is please give the 128 a chance. It should be a 64 gamer's future, not a nightmare.
J M Lawrence, Walmley, W Midlands

It's easy for you to say that software houses should produce games to support a machine so more machines will sell, but surely it ought to be the other way round? The finances of a software house are very much more limited than those of a hardware manufacturer, and their risk is so much the greater if only a few units of a game sell because of the limited market. Commodore have always been backward in recognising the need for funding a software base to support a machine. Sinclair did it to a limited degree (but then, the ZX81 and the Spectrum were such cheap machines, they were bound to sell in huge quantities), and Amstrad did it when their machines were first launched. It does help.

We must hope the chicken and egg situation isn't perpetuated for too long.
LM

TIED-IN KNOTS

Dear Lloyd,
I write to warn readers of a particular danger related to playing video games in the arcades – that of the pick-pocket.

Recently I had my wallet stolen while in a local arcade, and this opened my eyes to how easy it is for the pick-pocket. Arcades are usually dimly lit and can be crowded; a gamer may often find a small crowd surrounding him. With people continually pushing by and the engrossing distraction of the game, it's so easy for the pick-pocket.

I would advise anyone who plays arcade machines, either at weekends or on holiday, NOT to carry large amounts of money and NOT to place their wallet in a back trouser pocket. A wallet is much safer in a front pocket.

Magazines like ZZAP! tend to show some of the attractions of playing arcade machines (I am not saying you should be blamed for the theft!), so I hope you would also warn of this apparent danger (especially as those lazy summer holidays are slowly approaching).
J Bell, Hull

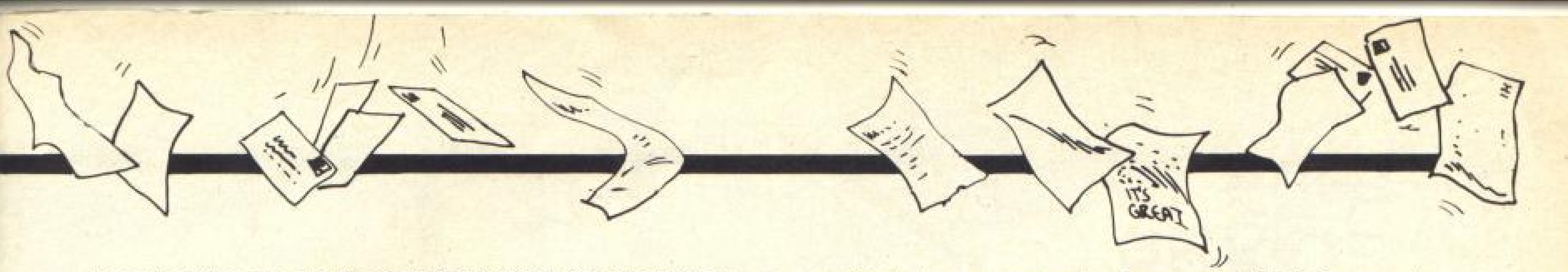
I thought I would kick off this section of compiled letters with Mr Bell's very sensible warning. But to many ZZAP! readers, the dangers of the arcade come closer to the sitting room. Arcade clones (and licensed tie-ins generally) have come in for some public battering in recent months. The following are excerpts from some of many readers' letters on the subject.

First though, **Stacey King** *from Goff's Oak, Herts, thought our recent Blackpool arcade feature . . .*

. . . was very good but it could have been improved with more screen shots. I would be interested to see it again.

But Stacey's interest in arcades doesn't extend to the home micro market, as he points out that . . .

The standard of ZZAP! is declining, but it is not the fault of anyone in the magazine. The blame lies with the software houses for the increasingly large amount of bodged licenses and mediocre rip-offs.



Stacey isn't the only one who feels ZZAP! suffers from the problem. **Graham Wright** *from Huyton, Liverpool wants to know . . .*

What the hell is going on with this magazine!? Over the past few months the situation has got worse. Gary Penn seems to be permanently in a bad mood. In the March issue his ZZAP! Ed! section was a large one. He criticises nearly every kind of software out now.

At this point Graham's views diverge strongly from Stacey's. He understands Gary Penn's feelings over TV tie-ins, but when it comes to arcade conversions he says . . .

I completely disagree. People go to arcades and spend gallons of money on machines; however when a conversion is released people spend a limited amount of money on it and can enjoy it thoroughly because they can have unlimited plays.

Okay, so not all conversions are good, but the buyer has the right to check the game out before buying, and if he buys it on the power of the arcade game itself . . . well, it's his fault if he's let down by a bad conversion. People should check the games out before buying.

I'm not sure that the 'check before buying' principle is one available to many purchasers, however . . . If there are some good conversions, what have they been? **Stacey King** *again:*

The only decent licenses recently have been *Aliens*, *Terra Cresta*, *Flash Gordon* and *Dragon's Lair II*.

Hmmm, personal taste obviously dictates which games readers like the best. **Shaun Russell** *from Shildon in County Durham has a different selection.*

So US Gold got the top Software House Award. But do they justify this recognition?

'Yes!' I hear you shout. They released some brilliant games in 1986 such as *World Games*, *Leaderboard*, *Vietnam*, *Germany 1985*, *Super Cycle* to name but a few. But US Gold just obtained the rights to these games; no programming was involved. The crunch comes when we think of the complete disasters they've released – *Breakthru* (ugh!), *Crystal Castles* and *Xevious*, all of which were programmed by US Gold. Even *Gauntlet* was a partial let-down due to a lack of attention in dealing with some bugs which nearly ruined the gameplay.

Shaun doesn't just blame US Gold of course, and seems to feel that at least they can produce some gold along with the tin, whereas . . .

Elite even admit that their 64 games are sub-standard in relation to their Spectrum and Amstrad ones, yet us 64 owners have to pay the dearest prices for crap such as *Space Harrier*, *Paperboy*, *Frank Bruno's Boxing* and *Bombjack*, all of which have a combined lastability time of about two hours.

Yes, a spokesman for Elite did comment to that effect, although he also pointed out they were going to be working hard on the 64 side this year. It's been generally (though I think often inaccurately) felt that the 64 always scores over the Spectrum because of sound and graphics, but **Richard Leadbetter** *of Witham, Essex (not far from Andrew Braybrook's home I guess) feels that . . .*

Commodore software standards are beginning to slip.

When I got my 64, my Spectrum was relegated to the cupboard in the corner. But Spectrum owners are fairing much better in 1987, and original software – like *The Great Escape* is more evident than in the Commodore scene. I use my Spectrum just as much as my 64 these days. It's time for US Gold, Ocean, Activision and Elite to wake up. We're sick to death of Coin-Op conversions.

And talking of Ocean, back to **Shaun Russell** *again . . .*

Ocean are just as much to blame for poor releases as US Gold and Elite, yet people still voted for them, probably just on the strength of *Superbowl* and *Parallax*. But they should have taken into account *V*, *Miami Vice*, *Nomad*, *Comic Bakery*, *Yie Ar Kung-Fu II*, etc. I'm sure you agree that the bad outweighs the good enormously.

But people DO like coin-op games, and the earlier point about being able to play their conversions at home, is well made. So what's wrong with them? **M Linklater** *from Hartlepool, Cleveland, reckons that these days . . .*

. . . software is becoming more and more over-commercial, and the software being produced is a load of CRAP. What you are buying are overpriced pretty graphics and catchy tune facades disguising very weak and unoriginal skeletons of games underneath. These so-called 'officially licensed Arcade conversions' are a pain in the neck.

If the conversions themselves were up to the same standard as their arcade counterparts it might not be so bad, but what do you get? A hurried 'representation' of a game with exceptionally good graphics but very poor gameplay. An example of this is *Commando*.

I'm not blaming the actual people who are given the task of converting these games, I'm blaming the whole industry. Why should we be subjected to a constant flow of over-hyped old arcade games, when new innovative games would sell like hot cakes!

And that seems to be the crux of the matter. So many letters mention, even in passing, that original software is becoming scarcer on the 64, and that the extra cost involved in purchasing a licence could well be spent on development costs for a talented programmer. **Shaun Russell** *agrees with Linklater's point.*

There are many software houses who continually purchase tie-ins and conversions without thinking of the quality of past releases. The only way to make software houses improve the standard of releases is to stop buying the junk, and to give more support to original software from people such as Sensible Software, Andrew Braybrook, Jeff Minter, etc.

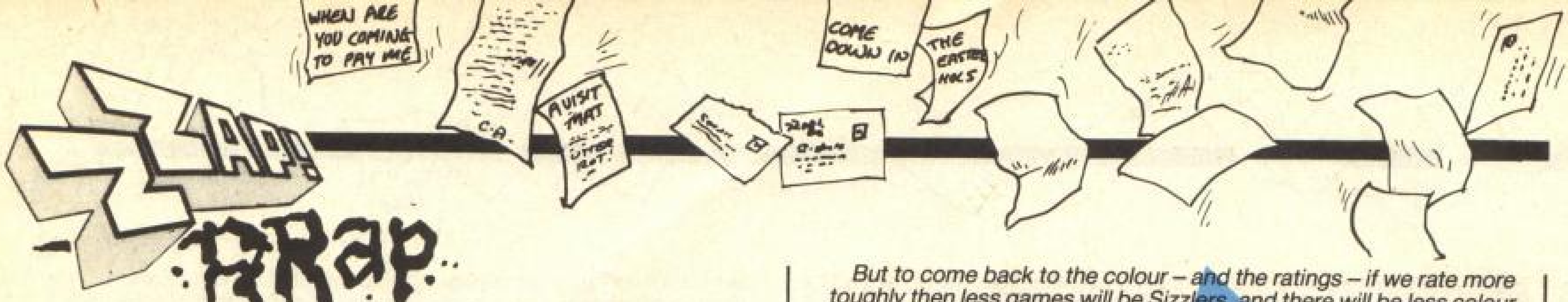
And **Richard Leadbetter** *is in complete accord with this sentiment too . . .*

The arcades are full of good ideas, point taken. But why not let talented programmers like Chris Butler take that idea and develop it – not copy it. Spend more money on game development – not a license on an arcade game that's impossible to copy.

I would like to see more original 64 software, like *Paradroid* by Hewson. I'd rather see more people coming up with good ideas for games, than talent going to waste on rubbish like *Space Harrier*. So come on software houses, get it together!

I think a lot of ZZAP! readers would say 'Amen' to that Richard. It does seem a terrible waste of talent for good programmers to spend their time playing around with previously devised concepts. I'm not saying NO to coin-op conversions, as long as they're good; but if it's really felt to be a safer commercial bet to spend time and money on conversions or licensed product, and at the expense of original thinking, then it's time to say 'no', and have done with it.

LM



SOFT SOUND OF SIZZLING

In combination with the clutch of letters about tie-in games, there's been a recent spate of 'whatever happened to the Sizzler?' letters. Some readers seem to feel that ZZAP! is a let down if there aren't half-a-dozen Sizzlers per issue, whereas **Eamonn Cleary** *from Enniskillen, Northern Ireland is pleased to see less . . .*

I'm glad to see you handing out Sizzlers a little more sparingly, and being considerably harder on really bad games. I think that only really excellent games should get anywhere near 90 percent with good games around 70 percent and the fair to poor below that; because, let's face it, the real reason you're here is to guide the customer, and so the more you verbally batter a crap game, the less likely it is that some poor kid is going to buy it just because it bears the name of his favourite TV show on the box.

But judging by some writers, the real problem with a lack of Sizzlers is not so much a dearth of good games to read about and buy, but the consequent lack of colour reviews in ZZAP!
Graham Wright from Huyton, Liverpool, *who also has much to say about tie-ins (see* TIED-IN KNOTS, *thinks that . . .*

I and a whole lot more people think colour makes the mag much more attractive. Over the past few months ZZAP! has lost its colour and only a few pages get it now. Even Sizzlers don't get colour now.

A point observed by several, including **Robert Love** *from Wembley, Middlesex, who was . . .*

. . . amazed to see that in Issue 23 the only Sizzler – *Mutants* – was in black and white, whereas *Portal*, which didn't even receive a Sizzler, was in colour. When us readers flick through your mag, it's the colour reviews which tend to catch our attention, so I suggest that the best ten or so games each month should have more space and be in COLOUR.

A thought which has occurred to us as well Robert. More in a mo. **Wayne Smith** *who lives in Bromborough, Merseyside also wants to know why . . .* . . . don't Sizzler games automatically get printed in colour any more? I've noticed a reduction in colour reviews of late and this makes the ZZAP! appearance rather dull next to the other inferior magazines. As an example, in the March edition, out of a total of 29 reviews, there were only two games whose screen shots were shown in colour, and of these one was a leftover piece from the February edition, while the other was a disk-based game which wasn't even up to Sizzler standard.

Wayne's a bit upset because . . .

What did that leave us humble cassette users to look at – dull, black and white shots which hardly helped sell the game. *Mutants* – 'Graphics, 95 percent, very unusual, COLOURFUL, and highly effective.' Surely a case for colour screen shots, especially as it *was* a Sizzler.

Robert Love mentioned that Portal *got the colour, but in this case it arrived for review way before* Mutants. *Given the work involved in separating colour pictures ready for printing, there wasn't enough time to have colour for* Mutants, *especially as it only arrived a few days before our deadlines. Now – ask yourself this question: would you prefer an earlier, black-and-white review of* Mutants, *or a full-colour review a whole month later?*
But **Graham Wright** *still thinks that the lack of colour reviews shows that we are . . .*

. . . not putting full effort into the magazine anymore. This mistake was marked by a whole lot more in the March issue. I think these next few months ZZAP! could finish production because in the ZZAP! Ed (March) Gary Penn seemed to be saying software is so bad these days that it's not worth reviewing. All this adds up, and in the end ZZAP! will finish and probably move onto a new computer like the Atari ST or the Amiga for a new mag, because all your reviewers seem to go on about is the wonderful Atari ST and Amigas.

Gary's rant was well justified in terms of awakening some awareness that the state of software releasing is pretty poor at the moment. And when have 'our reviewers' ever gone on about the Atari ST and Amigas? Rarely, if ever . . .

But to come back to the colour – and the ratings – if we rate more toughly then less games will be Sizzlers, and there will be less colour reviews. Either that, or we lower the entry percentage to Sizzlerdom. But of course, we could just add colour screen shots to a few more reviews – certainly the good games at any rate. And this is happening now. Also the way better games are rated is being looked at.
Some readers, like **Simon** *of Worthing, Sussex, think ZZAP! has a very good record of sussing and rating games . . .*

I would like to congratulate Newsfield computer magazines for their excellence and for providing a public service (even though you should triple the number of, and enlarge your STAPLES!).
Many times we read of £10 game complaints but around two months before ZZAP! reviewed *Breakthru*, *Gauntlet*, *Paperboy* and *Space Harrier*, these games were high and climbing in software charts. As it turns out, only *Gauntlet* was considered a worthy purchase by ZZAP! (and other magazines) and as reviews are 90 percent accurate (allowing for individual taste) 90 percent of the time, it's better to WAIT for these reviews. Many people obviously *are* convinced by adverts and coin-op conversion symbols!

The real crux of the matter though, is the way games are rated. Should we lower the percentage required for a Sizzler, then obviously more games would be Sizzlers, but this isn't necessarily a good move. **Robert Love** *has this to say . . .*

Percentages must stay as a guideline, but the main points of the ratings table should consist of those comments we usually see under the percentages. I therefore suggest enlargement of the ratings table and the reviewers' comments section.
Hookability and Lastability should be combined, seeing that the Lastability of a game depends on how much it hooks you. Giving a percentage for this, such as 98 percent is misleading, as it literally means we would want to play it 98 percent of the time.

Not quite, Robert. A percentage of time has nothing to do with it. It's an abstract rating, based on a hundred. However . . .

The comment under Lastability should tell us whether the game will give us a few hours of enjoyment or a few weeks, and whether it will still be as enjoyable after a couple of months. To replace Hookability there should be Playability, telling us how easy the game is to control, and whether the actual gameplay itself is simple or down right impossible.
The Overall rating, considering it puts all previous views into one, should be the largest section and should clearly state drawbacks such as: loading system spoils game play, or excellent graphics but no gameplay. This would then show your overall reason for the percentage you give it.

Certainly something to think about over the next few weeks. On the other hand, perhaps a rash of great games will appear soon and resolve so many of these problems for us! Well, maybe . . .

LM

GIVING THE PUBLIC A GO

Dear Lloyd,
In reference to Jack Diamond's letter in Issue 24, the idea of giving the public games to review is stupid. *Commodore User*'s system of different people reviewing games is bad; but give it to the public and just about all of your readership will go over to *CU* or something else like that. The present system is alright apart from the odd slip up (*Terra Cresta* for example).
By the way, the PBM idea is good, and I'd like to hear more on it.
Stacey King, Goffs Oak, Herts

Not to mention that we would never get ZZAP! to bed each month! It's really quite impractical to use 'the public'. I know I'm not supposed to refer to how things get done, and as readers, you should accept ZZAP! as an effortless product, but few people realise what a panic it is every month, to get games reviewed, written up and go through all the processes involved with publishing them. There simply isn't time to have anyone else outside of the fully employed ZZAP! Towers personnel reviewing games. Besides which, we would be at the mercy of relying on others to provide copy at the right moment!

LM


rama rama
Can you escape its slimy grasp?
Spectrum cassette £7.95
Amstrad cassette £8.95
Commodore cassette £8.95
Amstrad disk £14.95
Commodore disk £12.95

ZZAP! RRAP

CUTTING THE DIAMOND

Dear Lloyd,
I'm rather peeved. Why? Because I've just finished reading the April 87 issue and a certain letter in the Rrap section got right up my nose. Yes, the one written by 'dear' Mr Jack Diamond.

What a complete idiot he is – his rantings made me sick. He says the ZZAP! Christmas Special was 'nothing special and vastly overpriced', because of the lack of reviews. So what? Reviews alone do not make a great magazine. The Special had a wealth of interesting articles, pages of tips, two parts of Mel Croucher's Tamara Knight series, Compunet, the ZZAP! lads feature, a look back at 86 and also a copy of **LM** – all in one bundle. That's what I call good value for money, and I'm sure that others agree with me.

Then he goes on to slag off poor Paul Sumner, or rather 'cloth ears' as he put it, and says someone should smack him 'in the gob'. Very nice. Mr Diamond, after reading your nasty piece of drivel I'm surprised Paul doesn't visit you and deliver a kick in the teeth. And also, the games Diamond mentioned and how he kicked up a fuss about their overall marks – ruddy hell. With *Firelord* maybe the mark should have been a little higher, but only in the 75 percent region. *Destroyer* – no, because as the review said, it is 'an accurate and absorbing disk-based simulation' and probably a no-no for C2N owners.

Tarzan's rating was perfect as the game *is* rather crude and playability is low. But to whine about *It's a Knockout* – is dreadful in all respects. *Skyrunner* was too monotonous and *Judge Dredd* (although being *the* character in *2000AD*) was utter, utter rubbish. Most of the recent arcade conversions are dull and quite poor.

I don't quite know how he expects a game that has been reviewed by a member of 'Joe Public' to get a 'realistic percentage' if the ones given by the team aren't to his liking. These people are experienced reviewers who've been doing their job for a long time and are quite knowledgable about these things. I can just imagine what a young lad's review would be like: 'I like the way the baddies move and the bang what happens when your plane gets blowed up'.

Nobody who reads ZZAP! is as experienced in the field of reviewing as the aforementioned persons.

As to the games you mentioned Jack, it is a matter of personal taste and preference and if you enjoyed them that's fine. But your letter contained some incredibly nasty comments about the ZZAP! team which I found rude and offensive.

No doubt you will be receiving rather a lot more of Jack Diamond 'fan' mail in the future, Lloyd
Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Mid Glam

I'm sure I will, Mike! Nevertheless, that's what Rrap is all about – a chance for the Jack Diamonds to blow their gaff, and a chance for the Mike Thomases to reply in kind. Keep up the good work, as they say. In fact the next writer has some opinions on the very same subject . . .

LM

LOONY LEM

Dear ZZAP!
Hello, me again, I've just recovered from a massive ego-boost after seeing my name plastered all over Rrap!, and this time I am writing on only a couple of matters:

1: Right, Jack Diamond, whoever you are. I think you have missed the point the point of ZZAP! and other mags like it completely. They offer OPINIONS from people who are experienced in matters computer game-wise. Just because you disagree, it doesn't give you the right to say they're wrong. So the team did slag off *1942*. In my opinion it's a load of rubbish, but of course you obviously think differently. The fact that it reached number 16 in the charts means next to nothing. With the reputation Elite has of being a good software house a game like *1942* will sell on that alone. Names count for a lot in the computer business – just look at *Fist II*. By Christmas it was at number 14 in the ZZAP! readers charts, but really the game was only just average.

Music – so what if Paul Sumner thought Galway's 'It's a kind of Magic' only reasonable. Again it's only his opinion and he's entitled



ONADER LAMBASTED!

to it. There's no need to shoot your mouth off about it. Personally, I think that the *Zoids* music is the best on the 64. The ZZAP! team seem to like *Knucklebusters*. You're obviously the kind of person that writes anything you don't like off as junk, or words to that effect. Everyone is entitled to their opinions, but not to slag off someone else's. At least not without substantial evidence, which, if I'm not mistaken, your letter seems to lack.

2: Now about the Play-By-Mail mentioned in April's Rrap!. I think it would be a good idea. One of my hobbies is role-playing, and I think computers, RPG's and PBM should become more closely linked. I think either science fiction or fantasy-based games would attract people, since computer games are split fairly evenly between the two. Or maybe something completely different – a PBM NATO/Soviet conlflict etc.

In running a PBM, you must consider the cost carefully. I don't know whether anyone at ZZAP! role-plays or wargames or whatever, but taking one look at the back pages of *White Dwarf* or *Adventurer* shows the countless numbers of amateur/professional PBMs. Most of these charge up to £10 for set-up rules and a couple of free turns. Further turns cost up to £3. You would almost certainly need to make yours much cheaper, although you would not be in direct competition. I feel many people would prefer to partake in a 'proper' PBM; that is, one they had seen advertised in a fantasy magazine. Lowering the price could counteract this.

3: When I saw the faces on the reviews in Issue 24, I killed myself laughing. What had Oli been drinking? Does JR really look like that when he sees a game he likes? It really is incredibly funny to look at.
Stephen Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs

I have an inkling that PBM is going to get more popular as time goes by, and no doubt ZZAP! will be doing its bit. A problem is the time running the things consumes – actually the element that makes them fairly expensive to play

As for Mr Diamond, well Jack, what do you have to say to your critics?

LM

ZZAP! RRAP

GETTING OUT FROM UNDER

Dear Lloyd,
On reading the letter entitled I'M IN DEBT written by Carl Waters in the March Issue (23) I felt I had to write to explain my experience with the Home Computer Club and possibly what to do about it.

I too joined because of the cheap games, but on their arrival my financial status was none too impressive so I had to return them. Presently I received a letter stating that I owed money, this was 'a friendly reminder'.

I ignored this as not enough time had elapsed between sending back the games and receiving the letter. As time progressed I began to get more threatening letters (as did Carl). Naturally I began to worry. I promptly wrote a friendly letter explaining the situation, but it seemed to be ignored as they continued to threaten. By this time I was very annoyed, so I wrote a letter stating how I felt, that they had made the mistake and five months was too long – these letters had to stop.

A little later I received a letter apologising; they checked their records and found the received the games five to six months ago.

If only someone had done their job properly none of this would have happened, or maybe it was done purposely? Please print this as it may save many people (including Carl) much annoyance and money.
S A Savage, Aylesford, Kent

Thank you for taking the time to write in about this. Quite often it's clerical errors that cause the problems rather than a will to do someone down. If anyone else has had unpleasant experiences similar to this with any organisation, I'd like to hear about it – but proof of your complaint would also be helpful.
LM

MEAN SCREENS

Dear Lloyd,
Why is it that so few games have a final screen of achievement when you've completed them? Why do so many games these days just go back to the first screen or level?

I find this most annoying as, after slaving away for two hours or more trying to complete a game, I expect at least a message of congratulations.

Games such as *1942*, *Hypersports*, *Trailblazer*, *Sanxion*, *Space Harrier*, *Super Cycle* and *Warhawk* are all guilty, and I feel that after paying £10 for a game, I should be congratulated for doing what I have done. *Green Beret* is a good example of this, and I was pleased to see a message of congratulation at the end of the fourth stage after three hours of playing.
Simon Hynard, Stoneygate, Leicester

It does seem a bit mean not to congratulate a player. And isn't it ironic that when most earlier games were not based on coin-op conversions, they should ape the arcade convention of saying 'Well Done', yet while there are so many coin-op conversions around today, so few bother. Not polite at all.
LM

LOAD-IT ADVICE

Dear Lloyd,
First may I thank you for the article that appeared in the last issue about my company LOAD-IT. As soon as ZZAP! arrived on the newstands our phone started ringing and hasn't stopped yet!

As people do not seem to understand why programs fail to load, the following explanation should be of interest to your readers.

1. Take a tape and shake it, you will find it rattles. This is due to play in the spools, obviously they have to be loose or they wouldn't turn.
2. During the duplication process of tape software this play in the spools causes a variation in the alignment of the data on the tape, if viewed on an oscilloscope the data lies in a thin straight line, the head on the data-recorder has to read the tape to load the program.
3. Because of these variations in alignment it depends upon how your data-recorder's head is set as to whether you will be able load the program or not.
4. To prove this, try loading your non-working program on a friend's recorder, the chances are he will be able to load it when you cannot, and if you take some of his non-loading software it may load for you.
5. Most software is recorded on both sides of a tape, which gives you a double chance to load it, as when you turn a tape over the spools drop in a slightly different position. Duplicating companies realise this and that is why they record a program twice.
6. Recently some software houses, who can only be described as silly, have started putting the main program on one side of the tape and parts of the program on the other side, the main offenders being US Gold, eg: *Gauntlet*, *Super Cycle*, etc. or Domark with their *Trivial Pursuit*. If you refer back to paragraph (5) it then becomes obvious why the customer has problems loading programs.
7. In correspondence with Commodore and various software houses we have found that the one blames the other, neither of them have bothered to tackle the cause.
8. The answer of course is to be able to vary the head alignment to suit the tape, this is why I spent months developing the 'LOAD-IT' system. If Commodore fitted 'LOAD-IT' as standard on the data-recorder the problem would be solved. However customer relations don't seem to be too important so 30 percent of all software sold will continue to be returned to the shops by harassed customers who can't understand why after paying out good money the program does not work.

I hope this rather long winded explanation helps people understand the problem more clearly.
'LOAD-IT', Brian Cattlin, Professor of Head Alignment, 35 Stretton Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands B90 2RX

Thanks Prof. I hope your phones stop long enough to let you get some work done!
LM

Let me say 'thank you' to everyone who's written in to Rrap, and 'sorry' to those who didn't get their letters (or parts thereof) printed. We do like to read what you write though (honest, even Gary Penn does), and what you say makes a difference to the daily grind. The address is, as ever, LLOYD MANGRAM, ZZAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.



"Sonar reports distant explosions."

AS SUBMARINE CAPTAIN WILL YOU SINK OR SWIM?

You're captain of a lethal fighting submarine in the perilous South Pacific and your goal is to find, attack and sink Japanese shipping.

You spot your prey through the periscope – but then – the enemy's escort sights you. Suddenly, hunter becomes hunted and survival depends on your skill and courage.

Silent Service is an ultra-realistic simulation of submarine warfare. Using superb graphics and sound effects, historical combat missions are accurately recreated. The action is non-stop, the suspense gripping.

Your submarine features all the critical battle stations – the engine room, conning tower and ship's bridge – and has a sophisticated attack plotting system. But, you must live by your wits.

There are 4 skill levels and various 'reality' levels so you can customize complexity. Success is rewarded with rank promotions.

Enrol for Silent Service. Available for the Commodore 64/128k, Spectrum 48/128k and Amstrad CPC. Cassette £9.95. Disk £14.95.

The Submarine Simulation

MICRO PROSE

SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

RANARAMA

Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick or keys

Mervyn is a rather unhappy sorcerer's apprentice – he's accidentally turned himself into a frog! Even worse, the poor amphibious creature has inadvertently conjured his way into a dungeon and become trapped.

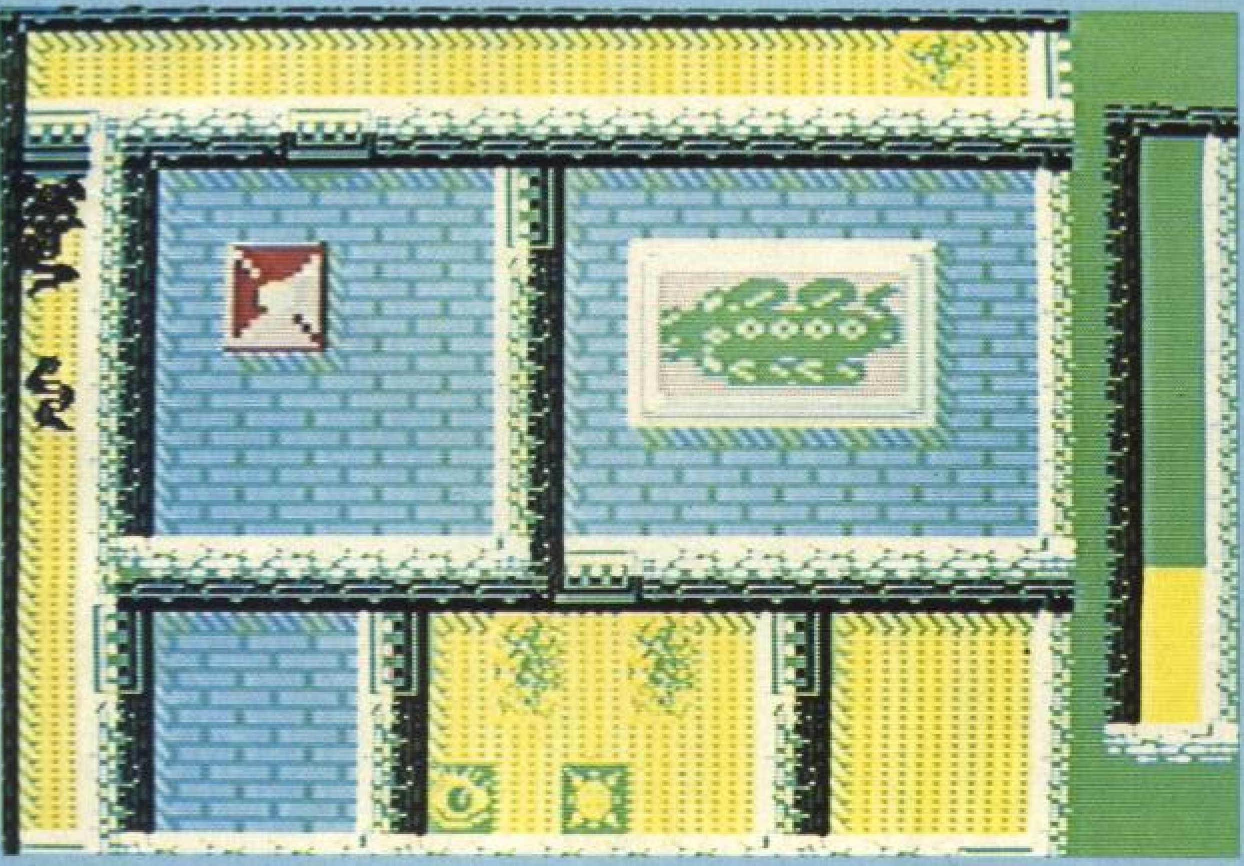
Throughout the eight levels of the dungeon there are a maze of rooms and passageways containing 12 evil Warlocks and their guardian creatures. A Warlock carries four runes, from which he draws his power. But should he be defeated in ritual combat, the runes are dropped and Mervyn can collect them. The frog-like hero is then endowed with extra magical power, eventually giving him the ability to become human again and escape from the dungeon.

The mission begins on Level One of the dungeon, with Mervyn exploring the environment for Warlocks. An aerial view of the room Mervyn occupies is displayed; leaping though one of the exits reveals another room, and as Mervyn moves around the entire dungeon becomes exposed. Some locations have hidden doors which are only revealed if Mervyn pushes against them or activates a Glyph of Seeing.

The Warlocks' evil creatures are found in most locations, attacking as soon as the amphibious one enters. Mervyn can fight back by throwing bolts of magic, but it takes several hits to destroy some of the more powerful opponents. In some locations there are generators which produce deadly magical weapons if they aren't shot and destroyed.

Ritual combat is declared when Mervyn runs into a Warlock. The fight begins with a screen showing the word 'RANARAMA'. The letters are scrambled, and Mervyn has to unscramble them again before the time limit elapses. Failing to achieve this within the time limit results in the total loss of Mer-

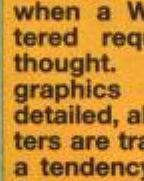




△ Level Two – the surrounding locations may look empty, but in true PARADROID style, the inhabitants cannot be seen until a room is entered

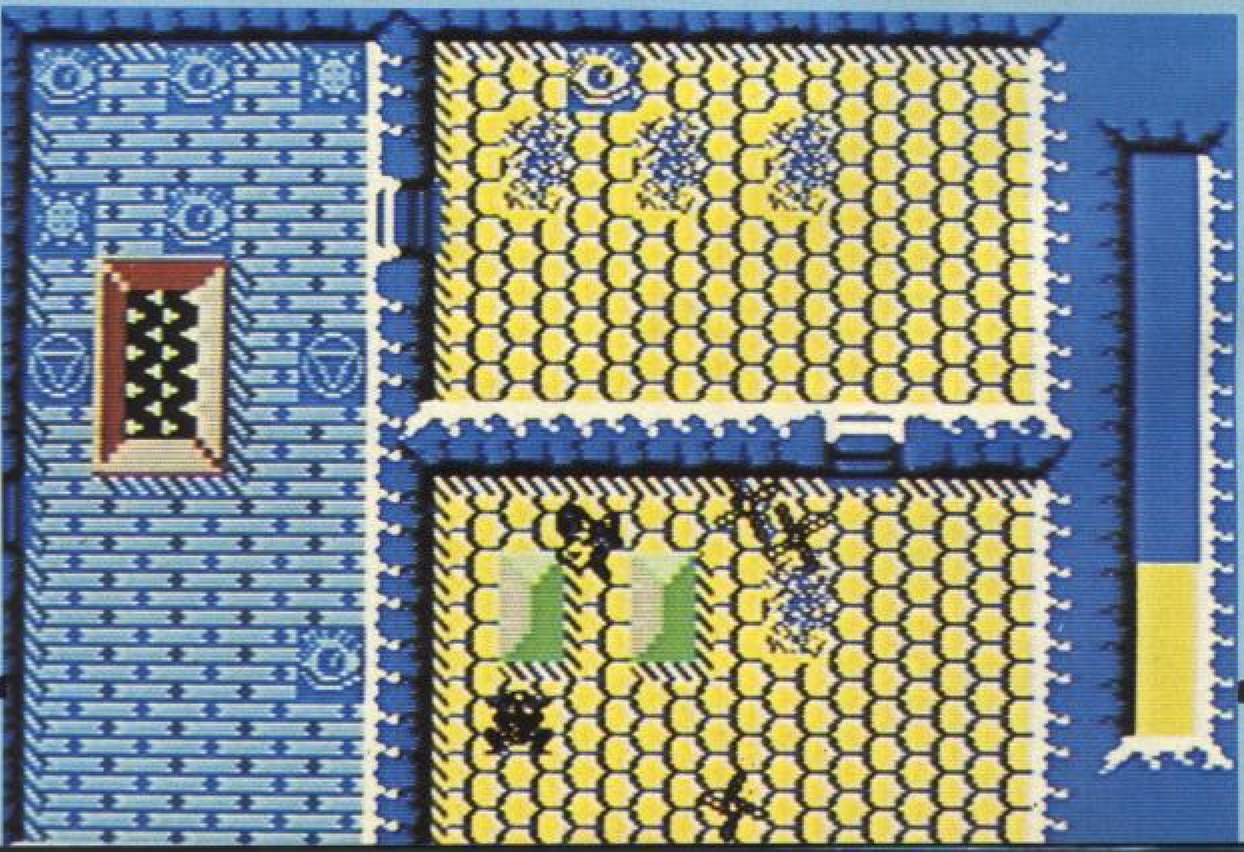


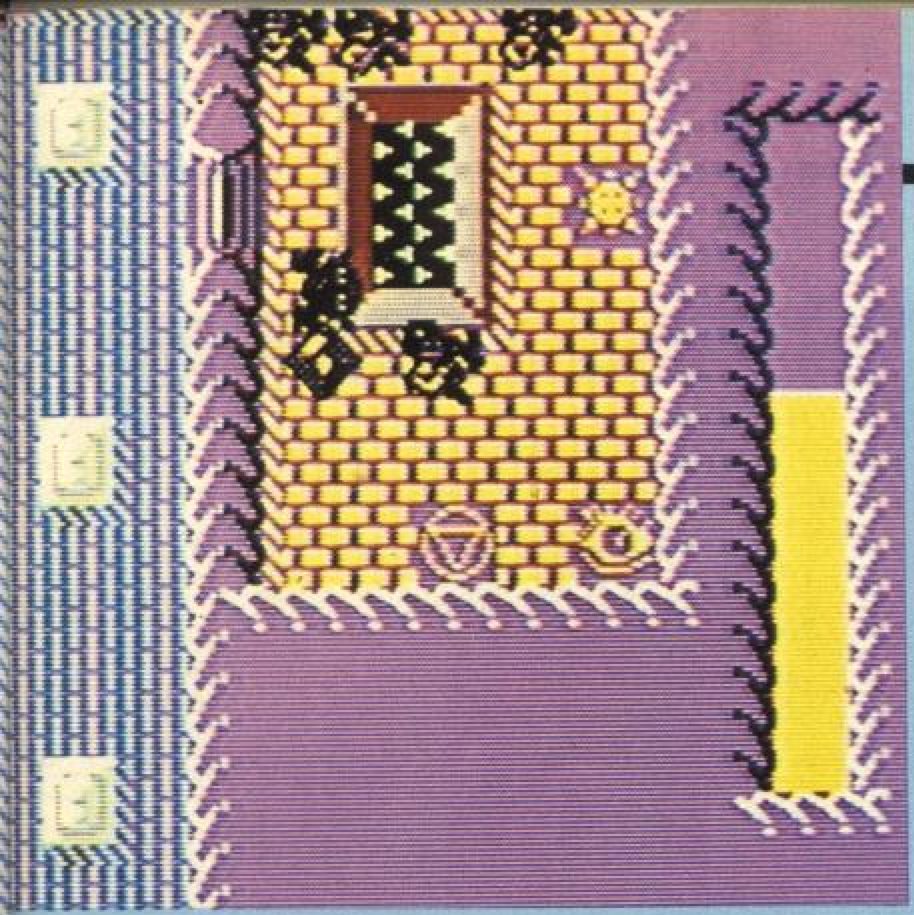
Ranarama is graphically and sonically weak, but it's beautifully designed, rewarding and incredibly playable. What's so appealing is the superbly balanced difficulty level. The first few levels are pretty easy, and then things start to get extremely tough, usually resulting in the demise of Mervyn. However, if you do one thing instead of another you can advance a little further – so you have another go, get a bit further and then realise . . . And so on. I found myself constantly going back, just to find out whether a lower level could be reached. Brilliant stuff – the best game I've played this month.



Ranarama constantly surprised me. Don't be fooled by the Gauntlet-esque overtones, there's so much more involved. The way the rooms are revealed is an innovative touch, as they only become visible when entered. However, exploration is only half of your worries: the intermission screen that appears when a Warlock is encountered requires fast, logical thought. The animated graphics are superbly detailed, although the characters are transparent and have a tendency to get lost in the floor patterns. The gameplay has just the right amount of blasting, mapping and thought involved to make it really enjoyable. Well worth the asking price.

▽ RANARAMA: sorts out the toads from the tadpoles . . .





vyn's life energy. Success results in the death of the Warlock and his runes are scattered, allowing Mervyn to retrieve them. The runes only remain active for a few seconds though – and if they aren't collected quickly enough, they disappear and are lost forever.

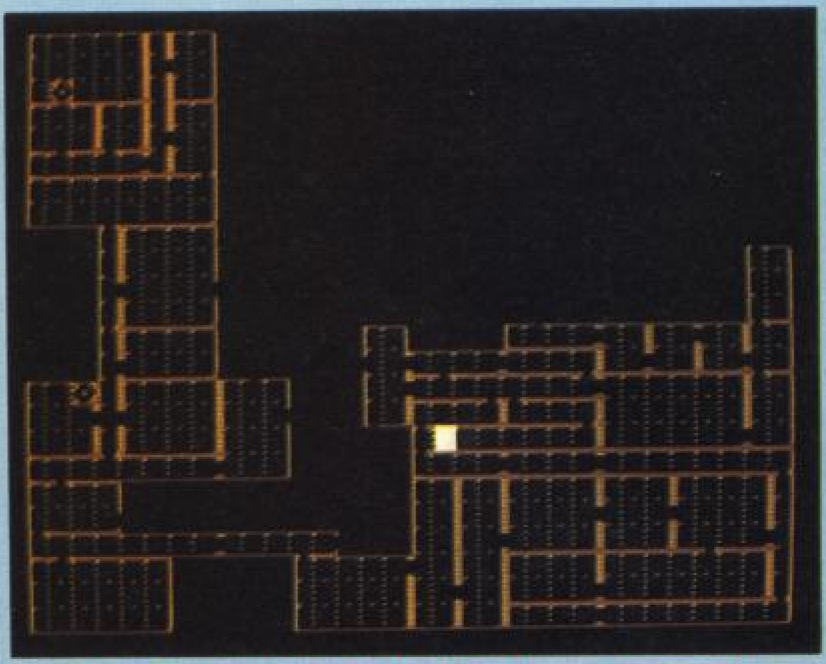
Occasionally, a room contains a Glyph carved into the floor. Glyphs are activated by stepping on them and endow the frog with extra abilities – Seeing, Power, Travel and Sorcery. Activating the Glyph of Seeing reveals a map of the explored dungeon (including hidden doors). The Power Glyph destroys everything on screen, and the Glyph of Travel is used to journey from one level to another.

The Glyph of Sorcery is the most important, being the key to ultimate success. Activating this Glyph displays all reclaimed runes, and Mervyn's four vital factors: Power, Offence, Defence and Effect. At the start of the quest Mervyn has Level One ability in each factor (apart from Power, in which he has Level Two – 'Psychic'). Pushing the joystick up and down flicks through the spells which can be exchanged for runes, and a spell is cast by pressing the fire button.

Mervyn dies if he fails to increase his Power Spell and loses all of his life energy. However, he starts the mission with a Level Two power spell, and this can be cast to give Mervyn another life. The unfortunate frog now starts his new life with a Level One spell – 'Mortal', and if all energy is lost before the spell is increased the mission ends. Mervyn no longer has the ability to create another life.

Progressing through the deeper dungeons, Mervyn has to gain Higher Energy spells in order to survive. For example, travelling down to the fourth floor with only a Level One Offence spell would be folly indeed!

When all the Warlocks on a level have been destroyed the environment goes dark, informing the player that another level should be explored. Destroying the Warlocks on Level Eight and collecting their runes enables Mervyn to shed his froggy exterior, and once again return to the human world – a Free Man.



△ A partially completed map of Level One, showing transporters to lower levels, doors (both visible and hidden), and Mervyn's position (the white square in the centre)





Ranarama is an unusual, though not entirely original concept – it borrows heavily from Paradroid, Gauntlet, and in some ways Wizard's Lair. It's a bit garish in its use of colour at times, though some of the sprites look decidedly creepy and work quite well. The playing area is huge, but there is little to do in many rooms apart from shooting the occupants – which soon proves tedious. Sadly, Ranarama is too derivative to be ultimately worthwhile.

PRESENTATION 94%
Superb in-game presentation and informative instructions.

GRAPHICS 59%
Unusual and initially confusing, but they portray the action adequately.

SOUND 56%
Suitable sound FX and an odd title tune.

HOOKABILITY 91%
Looks confusing, but the action is deceptively simple and captivating.

LASTABILITY 85%
Eight levels to get through – and the last four are extremely tough. However, the action is a mite monotonous and not suited to repeated or lengthy play.

VALUE 85%
Generously priced for a program which gives instant playability and sufficient lasting appeal.

OVERALL 87%
A well structured and playable *Paradroid* variant.

SHAO-LIN'S ROAD

The Edge, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Lee has been awarded full honours in the secret martial art of Chin's Shao-Lin, a ferocious fighting skill which endows its master with the power to kill with one blow. Now armed with this terrifying power, he has gone out into the world to seek his fortune. Discovering a mysterious temple, Lee enters – only to find himself beset by evil villains who have decided that they're going to kill him . . .

This is where you join the action. Stepping into Lee's shoes, you have to twice battle through five different scenes. Each scene has three levels and is three scrolling screens long. Lee can jump from one level to another, a useful ability which allows him to either dodge or attack the villains who inhabit each level.

When an opponent comes within range, Lee can lash out a deadly Chin Shao-Lin kick. The villain can retaliate, and each successful blow landed against Lee adds one point to his 'hit meter'. Sustaining more than three hits knocks Lee unconscious, relieving him of one of his three lives.

Occasionally, when Lee disposes of an opponent, a ball of energy appears. Collecting this endows Lee with temporary magical abilities, during which time he glows blue, and can hurl bolts of opponent-zapping energy across the screen. Lee quickly loses this power, and once again reverts to using his feet to defend himself.

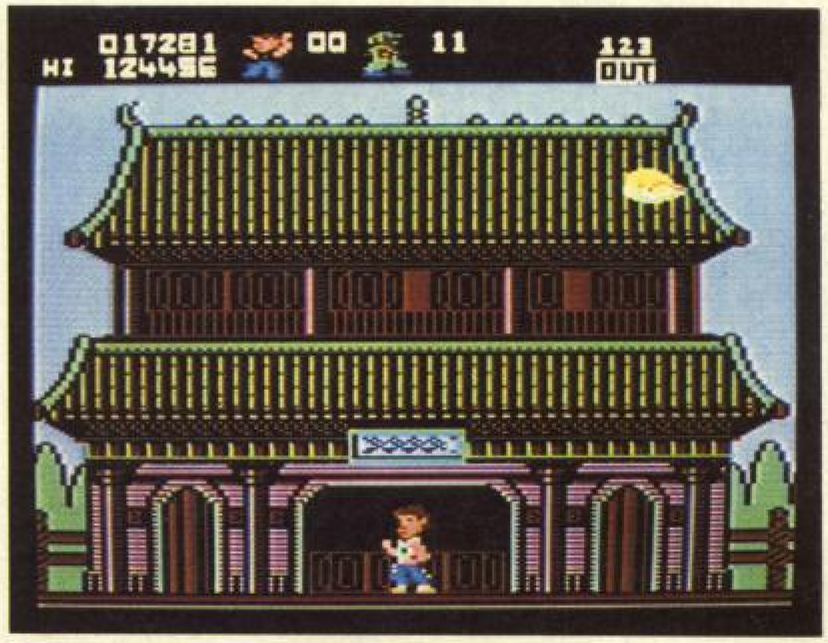
To progress from one screen to another Lee has to kill a prescribed number of enemies, with the desired number displayed at the top of the screen. When all of the villains are disposed of, Lee progresses to the next, more difficult screen.



Oriental combat games seem to be all the rage at the moment, but this one contains nothing to set it apart from all the rest. It's a fairly simple beat 'em up, and the action is repetitive and not particularly enthralling – though to be fair, it is quite frantic. There are only a few different fighting moves available, and constant play may prove very tedious indeed – even for fans of the arcade version.



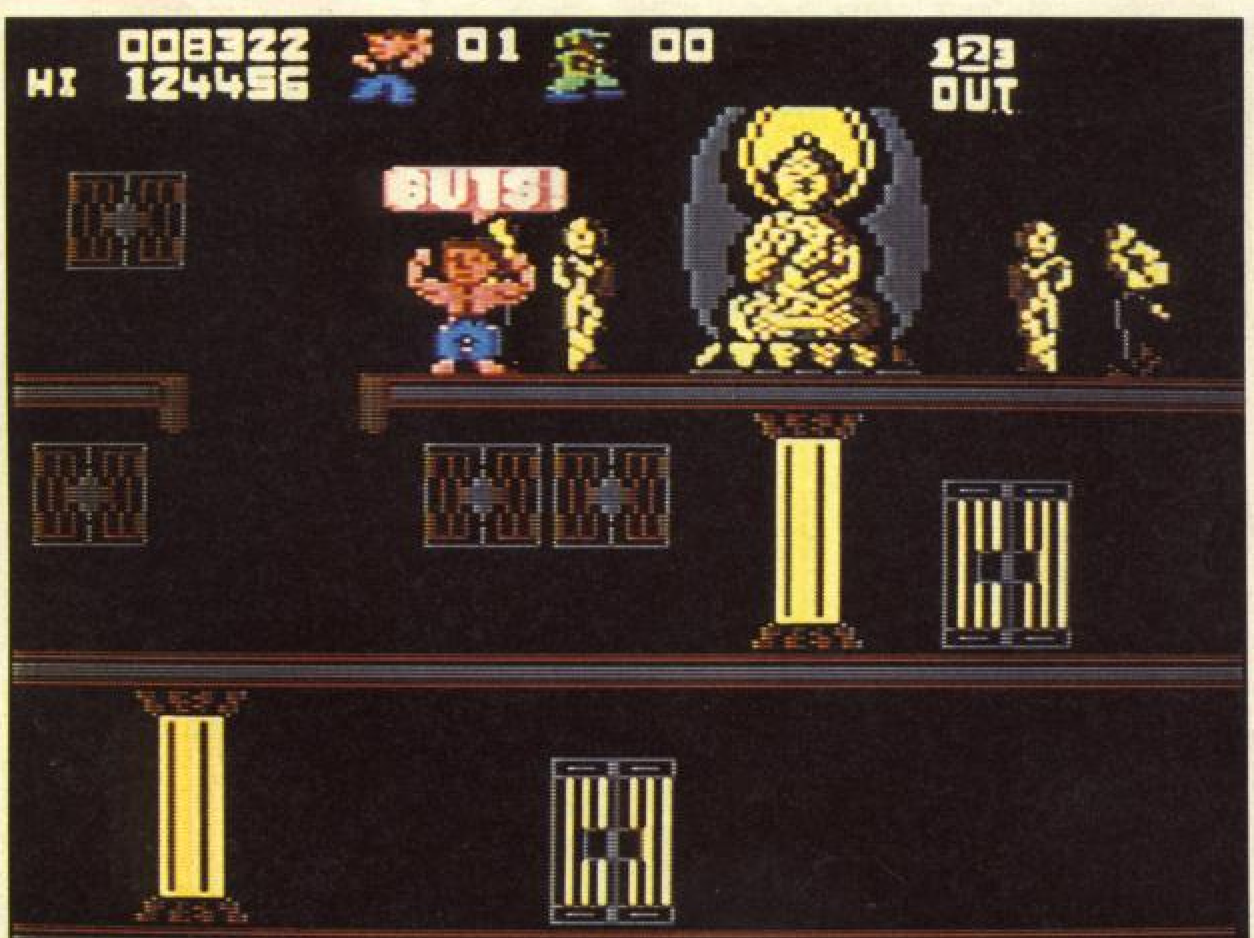
Shao-lin's Road **is by no means brilliant – but it's not dire. It's easy to get to grips with – simple punching and kicking moves, with a dash of running around for good measure. But there's very little to it, and I didn't feel sufficiently inspired to come back for more. It's far too repetitive, and certainly doesn't offer ten pounds worth of entertainment – give it a miss.**







If you're into barely average arcade conversions . . . then read on. There's nothing special on offer here – in fact there's nothing on offer at all except maybe a couple of hours entertainment. The graphics and sound are no more than average, and the gameplay is just about satisfactory. Things could have been marginally more interesting if Lee had been capable of a few more moves, but as it stands it's a limited (and eventually dull) platform/fighting game.



PRESENTATION 63%
Joystick/redefine keys option, and a reasonable title screen.

GRAPHICS 62%
Sprites are badly animated, but the backdrops are functional.

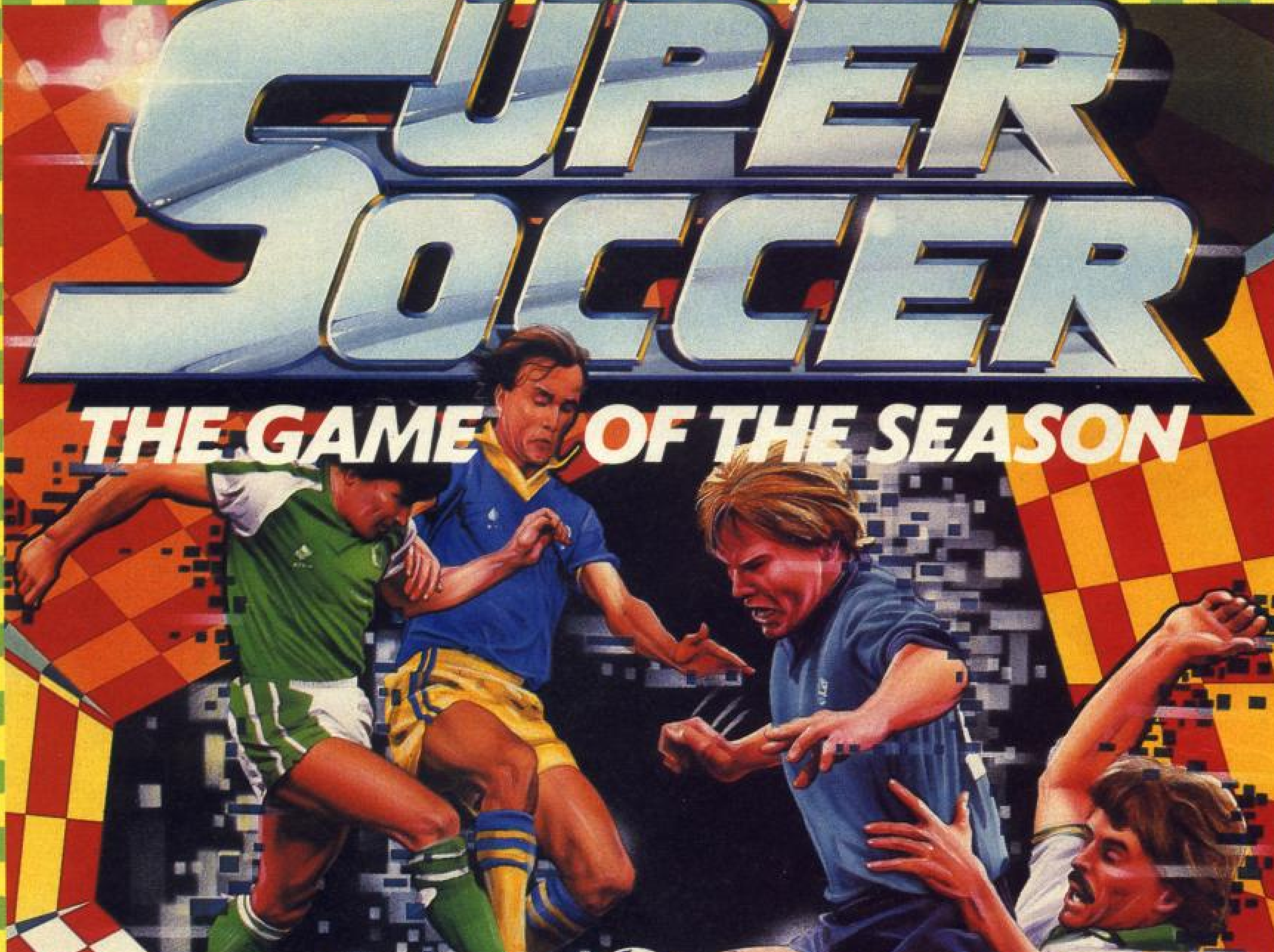
SOUND 43%
A below average tune doesn't add to the atmosphere, and the spot effects are very poor.

HOOKABILITY 66%
Easy to play, but not particularly exciting.

LASTABILITY 41%
The five scenes don't offer much variation, and once they're cracked there's little to bring you back.

VALUE 38%
Too expensive for such a limited arcade game.

OVERALL 47%
An average conversion of a none-too-impressive arcade game.



We think Super Soccer is the best computer soccer simulator yet. Be Maradona on screen. You can dribble past opponents, slide tackle, make crosses, even attempt diving headers. But what makes this game outstanding in its own field is the control you can exercise over the ball. No other game allows you to control the strength of your sharp shooting and ball passing like Super Soccer does. What's more, when taking free kicks you can organise the whole team with the "full team positional play" feature.

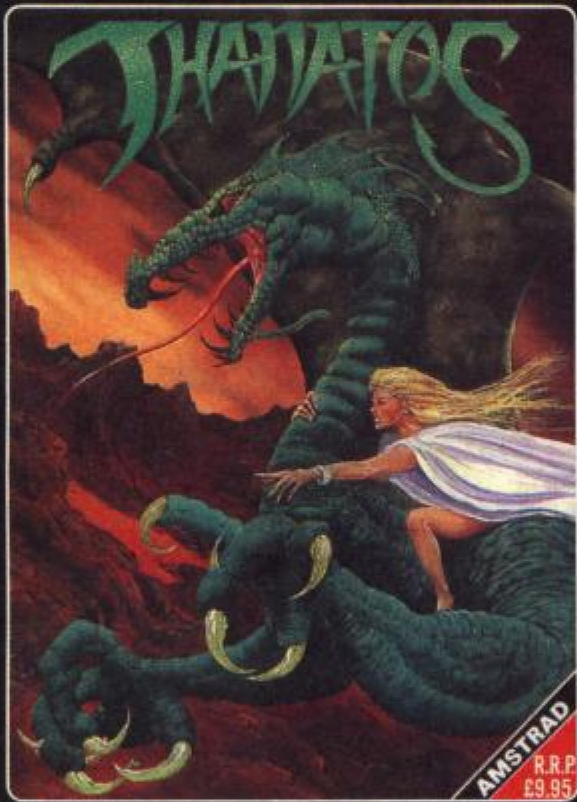
This is a 1 or 2 player game and there's an optional extra which allows up to 8 separate players to participate in a tournament competition.

So get on the ball in the game of the season.

Imagine ...the name of the game

COMMODORE £8.95

Imagine Software (1984) Ltd., 6 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS. Telephone: 061-832 6633. Telex: 669977 OCEAN G.



THANATOS

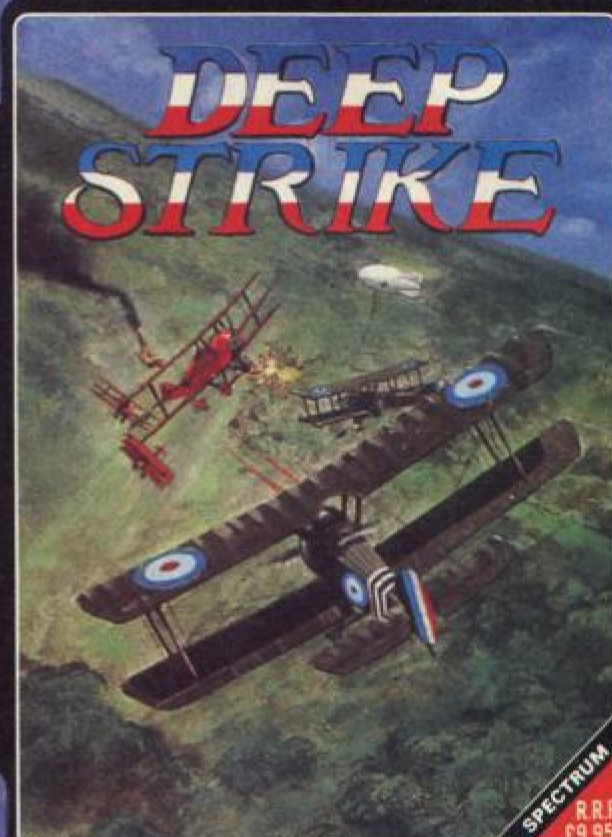
In this magical game you take control of a dragon, Thanatos the destroyer, whose eternal destiny lies in conflict with the forces of the underworld. The dragon which is very large and superbly animated, flies, walks, swims, and burns its way through the landscape. The game features fantastic landscapes with a totally new panoramic scrolling action.

"Wow! This game is really amazing, stunning, astounding, brilliant! The tune on the title screen is very nice, but the graphics are absolutely superb." CRASH, December 1986 (overall rating 93%)

£9.95 Spectrum cassette
£9.95 Amstrad cassette, £11.95 Amstrad disk (£9.95 by mail order)
£7.95 Commodore 64 cassette, £9.95 Commodore 64 disk





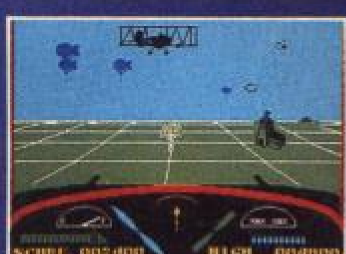


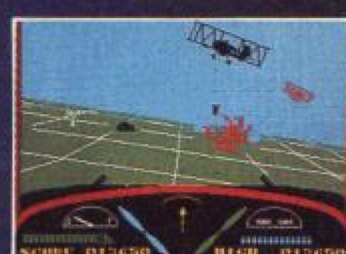
DEEP STRIKE

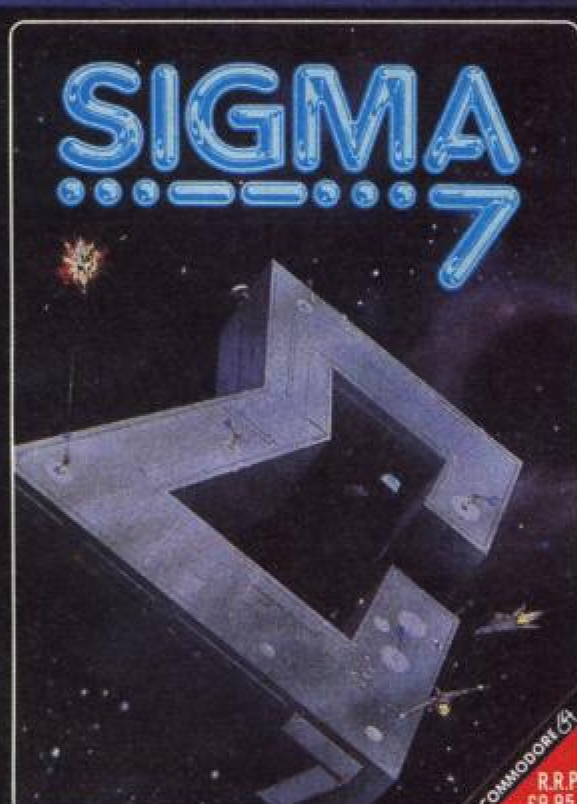
At last an opportunity to try your luck against the Red Baron and his flying circus of World War I flying aces. This game not only lets you take-off in a fully armed fighter, but also gives you control of the four bombers of your DEEP STRIKE attack force. It uses the latest techniques to bring you a smooth-scrolling and tilting 3D landscape viewed from the cockpit in full colour.

"...after a few games I really got into it. The way you can bomb the ground features (especially churches) makes the game much more enjoyable than if you just had to shoot planes!Overall a game that you should come back to quite a lot in the future." AMTIX, February 1987 (overall rating 71%)

£9.95 Spectrum cassette
£9.95 Amstrad cassette, £11.95 Amstrad disk (£9.95 by mail order)
£7.95 Commodore 64 cassette, £9.95 Commodore 64 disk







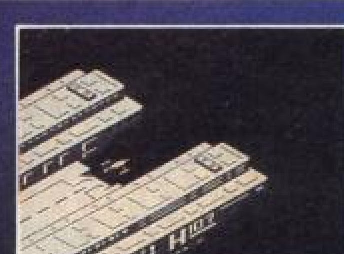
SIGMA SEVEN

An all-action arcade game featuring imaginative state-of-the-art 3D graphics and exciting synthesised sound. There are seven increasingly more difficult stages to the game which starts-out easy but ends-up almost impossible. Each stage is split into three phases : first take a space-fighter and blast your way to the next station through swarm-mine defences, then free that station's internal pathways of killer-robots and radioactive deposits, to finally reach the remote-controlled main panel which must be reset within a critical few seconds.

"I really like this – it has three neat mini-games all of which are very playable and addictiveThe graphics are really crisp and clear with a beautiful starry backdrop..." ZZAPP, February 1987 (overall rating 70%)

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£9.95 Commodore 64 cassette, £9.95 Commodore 64 disk





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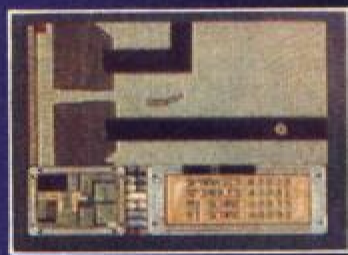
FAT WORM BLOWS A SPARKY

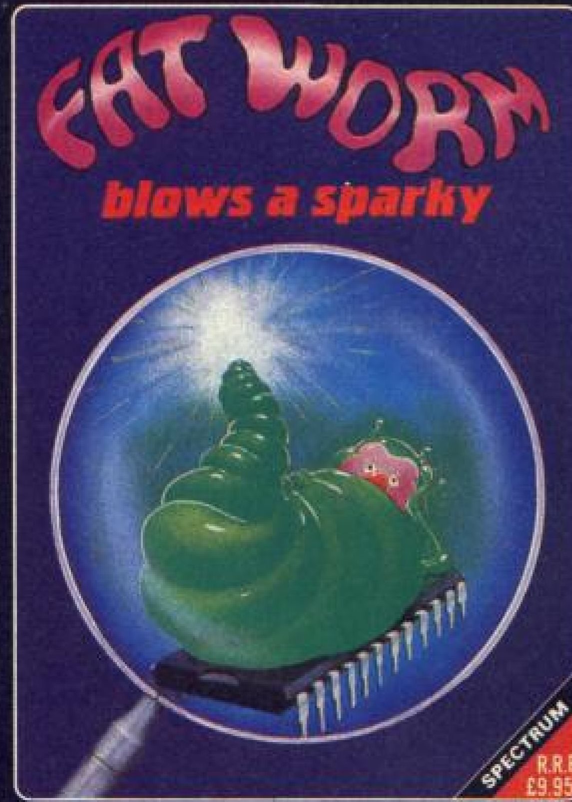
Now for something completely different. You are an insidious little wormie being chased through a Sinclair Spectrum by creepers in sputniks and crawlers on feets. Defend yourself by shooting burper sparkies at the crawlers, and blaster sparkies to take-out the sputniks. You'll see the computer board in a smooth-scrolling 3D viewed from above, as you crawl around in search of a disk drive on which to clone yourself.

"Playability and addictiveness are of the highest standard, but as for the graphics – well, what can I say? As far as animation and solid 3D goes, this is probably the best I have ever seen" CRASH, November 1986 (overall rating 95%)

£9.95 Spectrum cassette only









SABOTEUR II – Avenging Angel

A follow-up by the original author, where as the Ninja's beautiful sister, your mission is to revenge your fatally wounded brother. The rebels have found that the disk he stole in "SABOTEUR" also contains data for one of the dictator's missile silos. Your job is to fly in by hang-glider, fight your way through the security guards, pumas, dogs and radio-controlled robots, to seek out some top secret punched tape to activate the missile's launch control. Launch it, disable the electric perimeter fence, then break-out by motor-bike. Over five hundred locations, three buildings, underground caverns, intelligent guard dogs and stupid guards.

£7.95 Spectrum cassette
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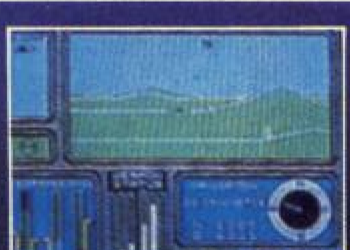
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"Unlike most compilations where one title carries the others, the BIG 4 are actually four big games...A collection worth collecting." C & VG, December 1987

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ELEVATOR ACTION

Quicksilva, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

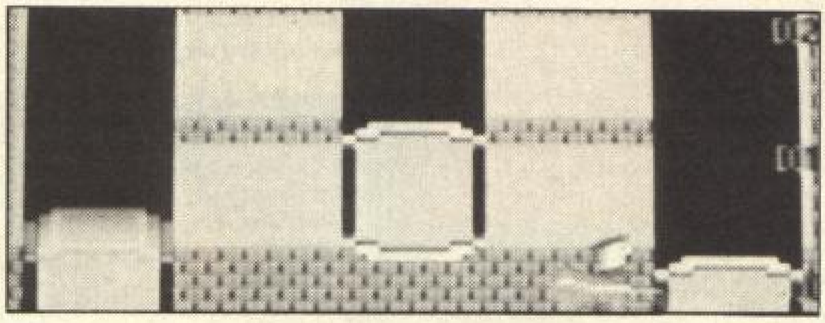
Otto is really hard. He's a tough secret agent who has just been given a mission: to enter a thirty-storey skyscraper and recover a batch of stolen secret documents. Taking the role of this super-spy, the player begins the mission having just landed on the roof of the building in question.

The objective is to search the floors from top to bottom, using the lifts and escalators which connect them. Moving the joystick when Otto is standing in a lift or next to an escalator takes him up or down, with the screen scrolling to bring a fresh level into view.

On every floor there is a row of locked doors. Most are irrelevant, but occasionally one flashes to signify that there's a stolen document concealed behind it. By standing Otto in front of the door and pushing upwards he disappears behind it, emerging a few seconds later with the stolen paper in his hands.

Otto is repeatedly attacked by the building's armed guards, appearing from behind locked doors and shooting on sight. A direct hit costs Otto one of his three lives, and causes him to restart his quest from the top of the building. Our hero can fight back however – armed with a pistol, he eliminates the guards to defend himself.

When all the documents have been collected, Otto catches a lift to the ground floor where a getaway car awaits. And all because the lady loved . . . Nah.





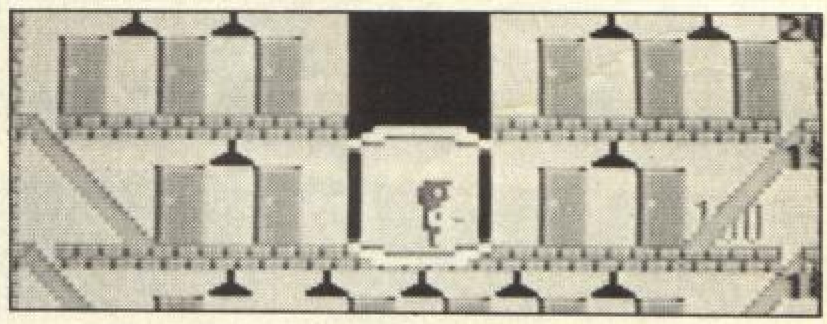
Originality seems in short supply this month – or is it just a bad attack of *deja vu*? This is very similar to a game called Gumshoe **which surfaced briefly several years ago, the only difference being that** Elevator Action **isn't as good – and it's a conversion. It's unexciting, badly executed and riddled with bugs – bullets appear from nowhere and baddies float halfway between floors! If you want a platform game with lifts in it, go and buy the ten game** Softaid **cassette. It includes** Gumshoe**, and you'll save yourself a fiver.**

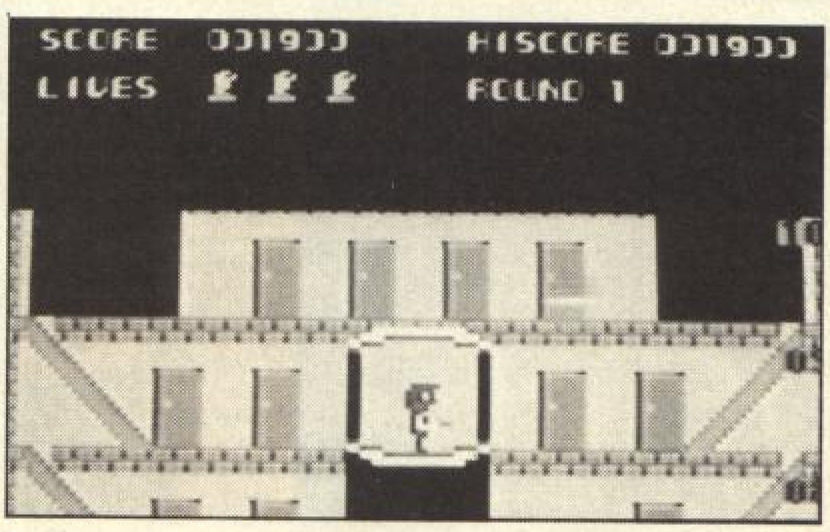


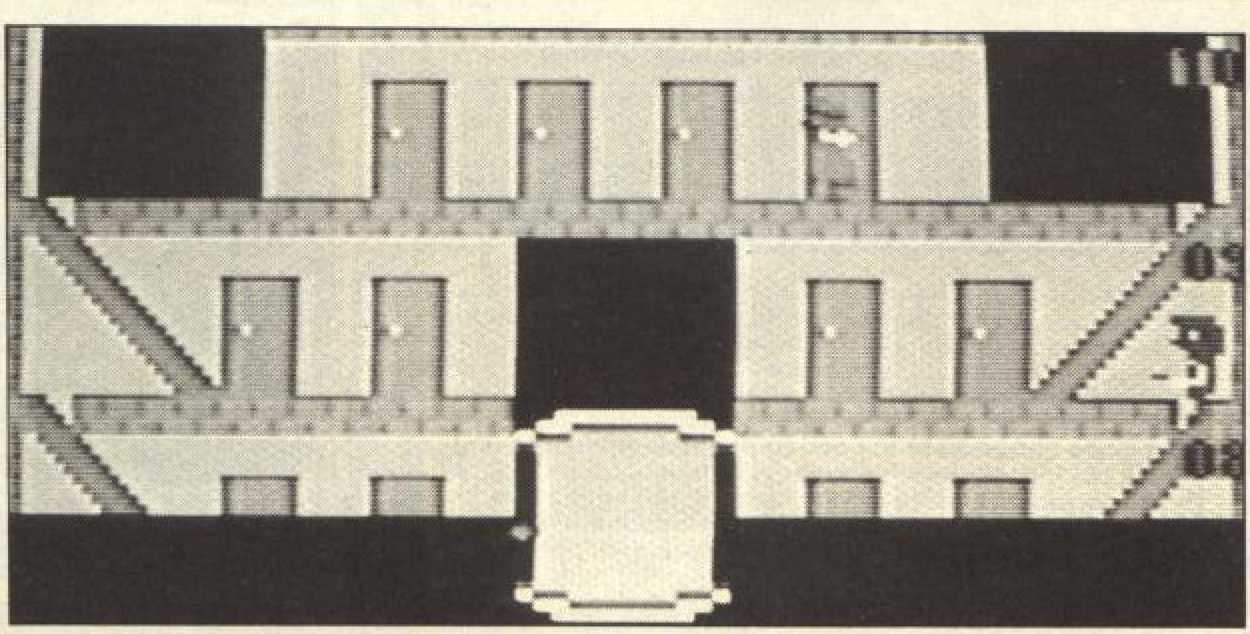
I'm really surprised by how poor Elevator Action **is on the 64. The programmers have failed miserably in every way; the graphics, sound and presentation (and to some extent the gameplay) have been lost during the translation. It didn't hold my attention for very long, as none of the arcade game's original qualities are present in any shape or form. Such a waste, especially when you consider how well Micropool improved upon the basic theme.**



I'm pretty disappointed, especially as I've been looking forward to this for some time. Why? Because this conversion completely fails to capture the spirit of the arcade original. My major moan is that the playing area and the characters are miniscule – why couldn't they have all been larger? The screen glitches horribly as it scrolls, and the sprites often float around on their own. Bullets often stop in mid air, and sometimes it's possible to walk right through them! Another detraction is the awkward control method – it's virtually impossible to get the character to do what you want him to. Personally I'd go for Micropool's Mission Elevator **– it's miles better.**







PRESENTATION 46%
Average title screen, no options, and very poor use of joystick.

GRAPHICS 36%
Small, indistinct characters and very poor, wobbly scrolling backdrops.

SOUND 71%
A repetitive, but atmospheric Dave Whittaker tune plays throughout.

HOOKABILITY 48%
The simplistic arcade action is easy enough to get to grips with.

LASTABILITY 23%
All the levels are exactly the same and the action soon becomes boring and predictable.

VALUE 19%
Vastly overpriced – you'd be wiser to invest in something more professional and playable.

OVERALL 29%
A disappointing conversion of an ageing, but still playable arcade game.



ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

INTO THE EAGLES NEST

Pandora, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

Deep behind German lines lies a huge fortress stronghold, codename: Eagle's Nest. Three commandos were captured while attempting to blow up this symbol of enemy might – but not before they had managed to plant explosive devices throughout the building. The Gestapo are subjecting them to horrific torture techniques in an attempt to discover the whereabouts of the explosives, and even highly trained saboteurs can crack under such intense pressure . . . So, your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to infiltrate the fortress, liberate the prisoners, and destroy the Eagle's Nest.

The action is viewed from above and takes place over four floors, each being accessed via a lift. Hordes of German troops patrol the fortress, inflicting damage (in the form of Hit Points) on contact. The resultant damage is decreased by eating food or by using a medical kit, both of which are to be found within the fortress.

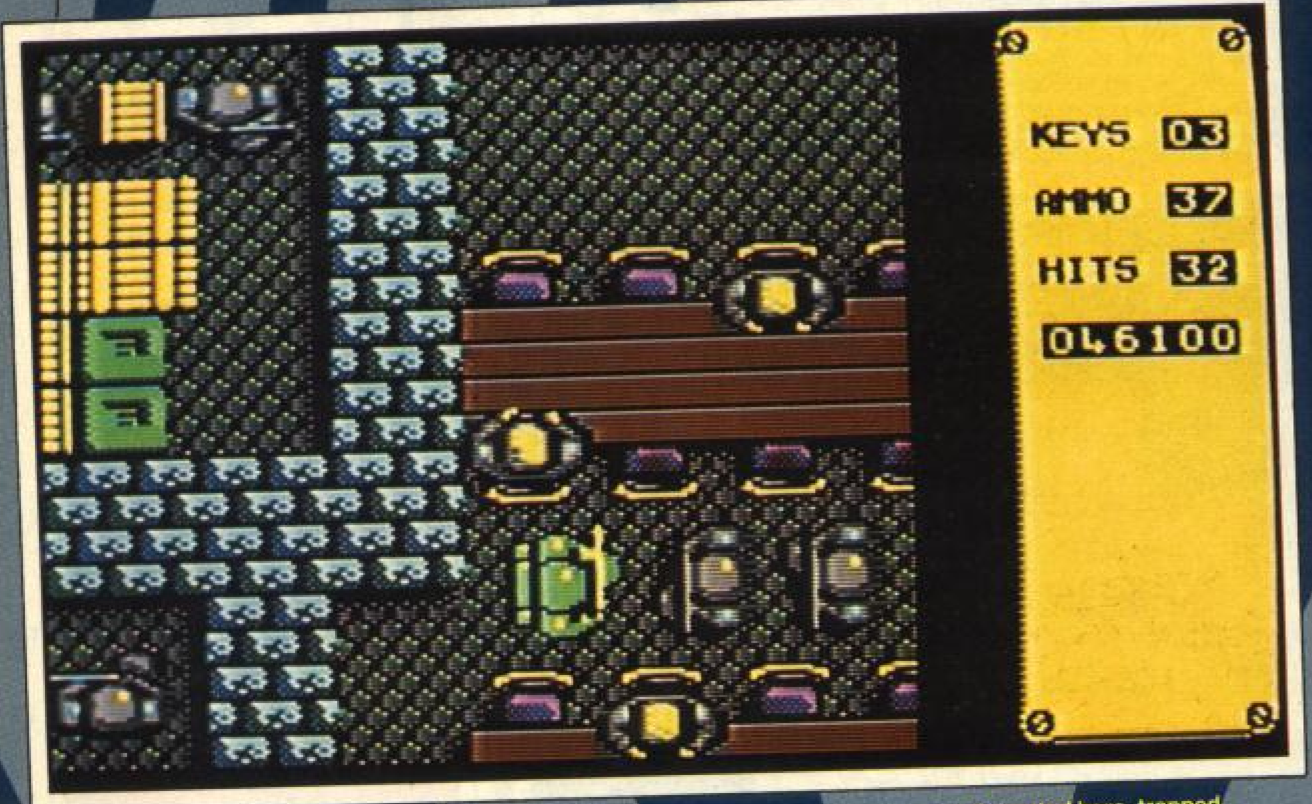
Enemy troops are killed by shooting them. However, only 99 rounds of ammunition can be carried at one time – extra bullets have to be stolen from the German stores.

Progress through the building is hampered not only by enemy soldiers, but by doorways – some can be shot open, while others can only be opened by a key.

A display panel to the right of the main screen shows your score and damage, along with the amount of ammunition remaining and the number of keys in your possession.

Beneath the rather ordinary packaging of Into The Eagles Nest **lurks a tremendous game.** Gauntlet **clones are all the rage these days, and this uses the format to great advantage. The graphics are very neat: really atmospheric, with great depth and detail. The action is tense and electric – especially when you come screaming round the corner, straight into a pack of German soldiers, all lusting for your blood! Highly entertaining and worth every penny.**



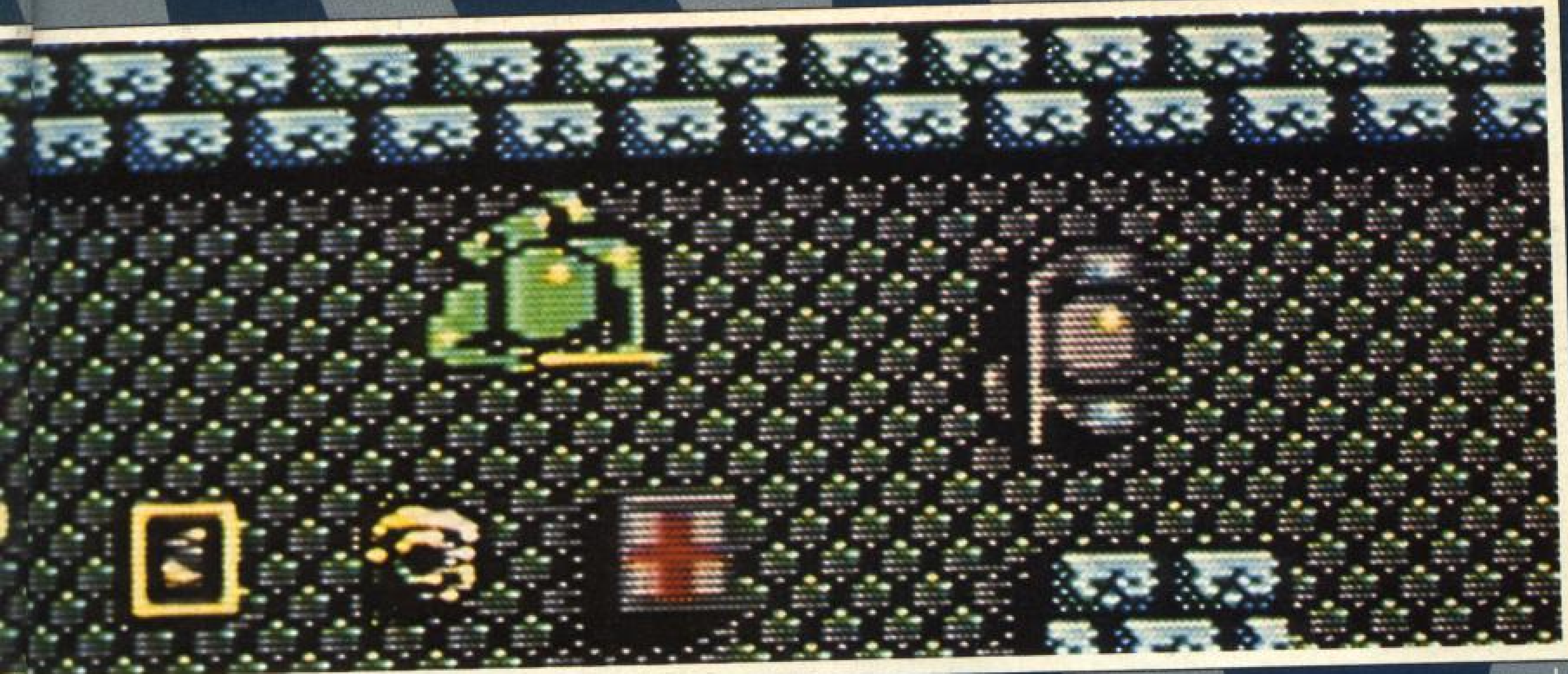


Two German guards attack our green-helmeted hero, trapped between two tables, destined to die – unless he lets off a couple of rounds . . . Captains sit at each table, twiddling their thumbs – shooting them reaps bonus points



Slick presentation is usually superfluous – but not in this case. Here, the atmosphere is enhanced, almost generated by the cosmetics – glorious, colourful and distinctly 'macho' graphics complemented by near-perfect sound, especially the ricochet of bullets, the metallic clang of a bullet hitting a locked door, and the subtle footsteps. The fact that gunfire is invisible adds to the overall feel – it's far more appropriate than being able to see bullets moving slowly towards you. Eagles Nest **is simply gorgeous. It's like playing with a digital action man or binary toy soldiers – only better, because they move and less imagination is required. Great stuff Pandora – keep it up . . . PLEASE!**





First Aid, a vase, and a valuable painting (no cuddly toys or pop-up toasters though) are there for the taking – provided the enemy soldier is disposed of . . .

Valuable art treasures are dotted about the castle, and collecting them increases your score. Treasures are also found in packing cases, opened by shooting the lids off. However, some cases contain dynamite and explode when shot – resulting in your untimely demise.

There are four increasingly difficult missions – the first three involve freeing one, two, or all of the prisoners, while the final task is to destroy the castle.

When a prisoner is found, he follows you around the fortress until your mission has ended. The Eagle's Nest is eradicated by activating a detonator, found on each floor.

Scrolling messages inform you of any items found or destroyed, and provide encouragement to aid you on your mission.

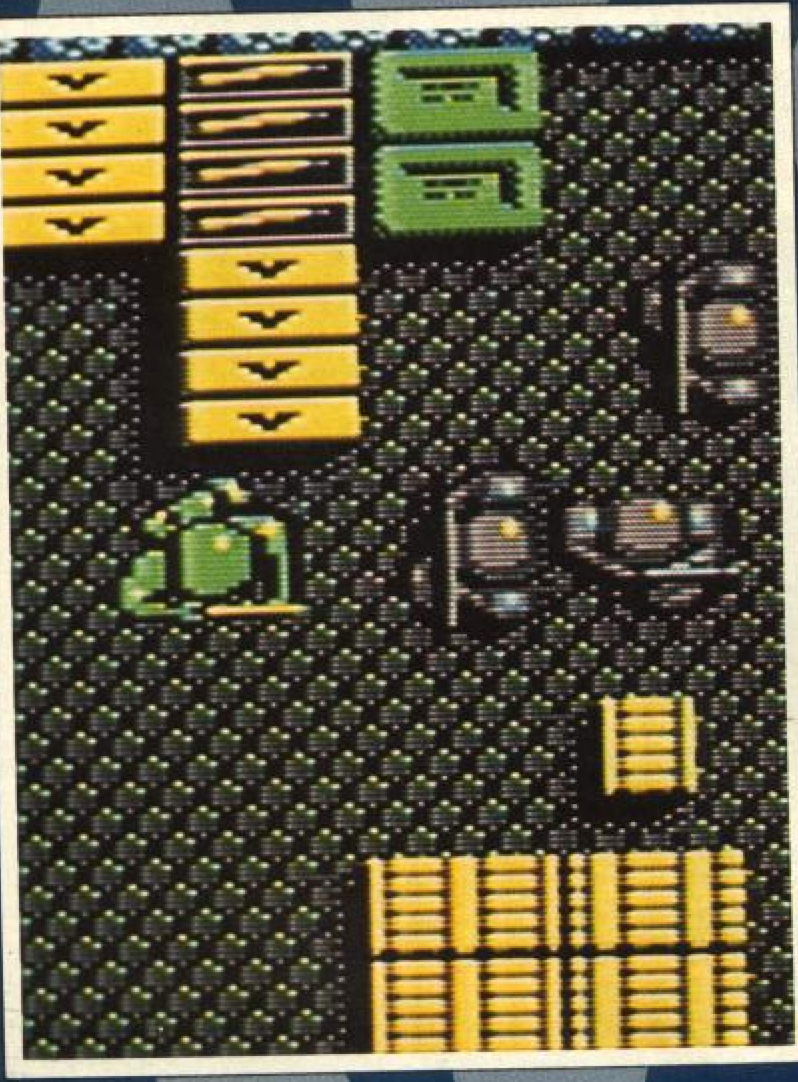
Although Gauntlet **clones are appearing at an alarming rate, some, like this, are extremely good. Atmospheric graphics and sound effects are combined with exciting and addictive gameplay to give an excellent game. What's nice about** Eagles Nest **is the feeling of 'being there' – it's very easy to get totally engrossed in the action. Completing the four missions should take a up fair amount of a player's time, and at nine quid it's well worth looking up if you're a** Gauntlet **fan.**





There's trouble around every corner – or so it seems . . .

"Bang Bang, Pop Pop, you're dead, I'm not . . . " binary toy soldiers at their best . . . "No fair! You can't kill me – I'm a tank!"



PRESENTATION 90%
Slightly confusing instructions, but slick in every other way.

GRAPHICS 94%
Wonderful attention to detail – suitably hard-looking soldiers move around superbly atmospheric backdrops.

SOUND 94%
Uninspired title tune, but beautiful spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 95%
Tremendous urge to seek and destroy.

LASTABILITY 80%
Not overly varied, but compulsive.

VALUE 90%
A fair price for some tremendous entertainment.

OVERALL 90%
A tried and tested theme, commendably developed into a glorious game.



CHOLO

Firebird, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk, joystick with keys

Nuclear war has decimated Earth and the human race is all but extinct. Below the charred remains of the city of Cholo lies a huge, self-contained bunker; a reinforced shelter against the ravages of the holocaust, and home to the remnants of the human race.

It was always intended that the computer in charge of the bunker should order Sentinel robots to open the shelter and allow the people of Cholo to reclaim the city. The damage sustained was greater than expected however, and contact between the main computer and the robots had been severed. Consequently the bunker's inhabitants are held as unwitting captives – even though radiation levels became safe more than 300 years ago.

You have now been chosen to liberate the underground prisoners. To do this, you must direct robots around the ruins of Cholo, gathering information necessary for the release of the bunker's occupants.

The city of Cholo and its robotic inhabitants are presented using forced perspective vector graphics. This gives a first-person view of the city, as seen by the robot under your command.

The explorable area is surrounded by a deadly radioactive wasteland. A geiger-counter type 'click' is given off when radiation is encountered. and a meter signals the strength of the emissions.

A small map of the city is displayed at the top of the screen, with a flashing dot signalling the position of the currently controlled robot. Initially, only one robot is under your control – a RAT grade model codenamed 'Rizzo'. However, it is possible to gain control of other robots, allowing a small android army to be amassed.

Attack from robot guards and strong radiation inflicts damage on your robot – a bar set at the top of the screen indicates the level of damage sustained. If the bar fills completely, your robot dies and control switches to another. The game ends on the destruction of your final robot.

The package comes complete with a novella to set the scene, and a large coloured map of pre-war Cholo – a useful aid to your exploration.



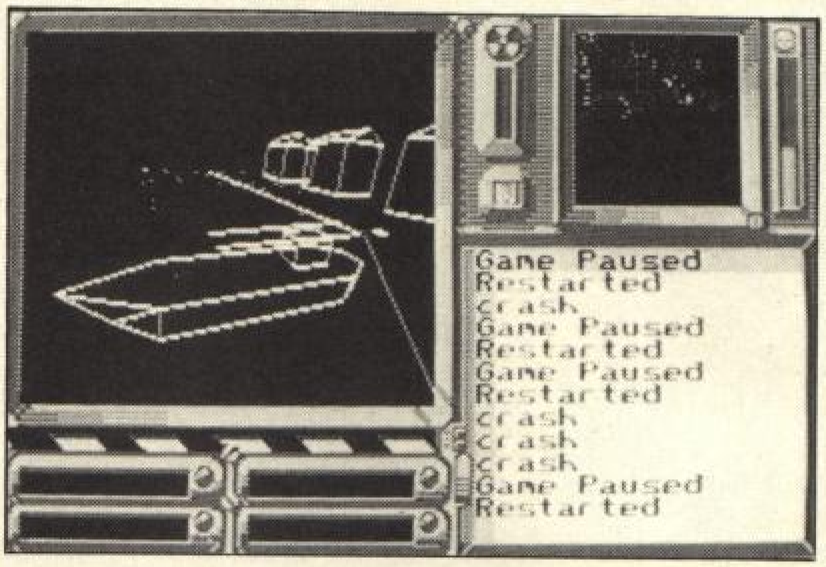
The storyline is superb, but I'm not too sure about the rest of the package. Cholo **shows the user a whole new world, and consequently a lot of initial interest is generated. However when you've been slowly moving around for a while the exploration bug wears off and things begin to niggle, like the rather slow update on the vector graphics and the sparse nature of the environment. Another annoying point is the way objects and buildings suddenly leap into view out of nowhere, and then blink out of existence when you turn left or right. I can see that this would be highly rewarding for those who persevere. However, the lack of fast action bored me very quicklv.**



As the action is fairly sparse, a game of this sort depends heavily on the atmosphere grabbing and holding the attention. In the case of Cholo, **the feeling of 'being there' is totally dependent on the strength of the vector graphics – and they are only just adequate. There are some really annoying aspects, such as when buildings flash into existence right next to you rather than gradually appearing. The gameplay is interesting enough and there is plenty of city to explore, but I would advise you to look before you leap –** Cholo **could have been much better.**

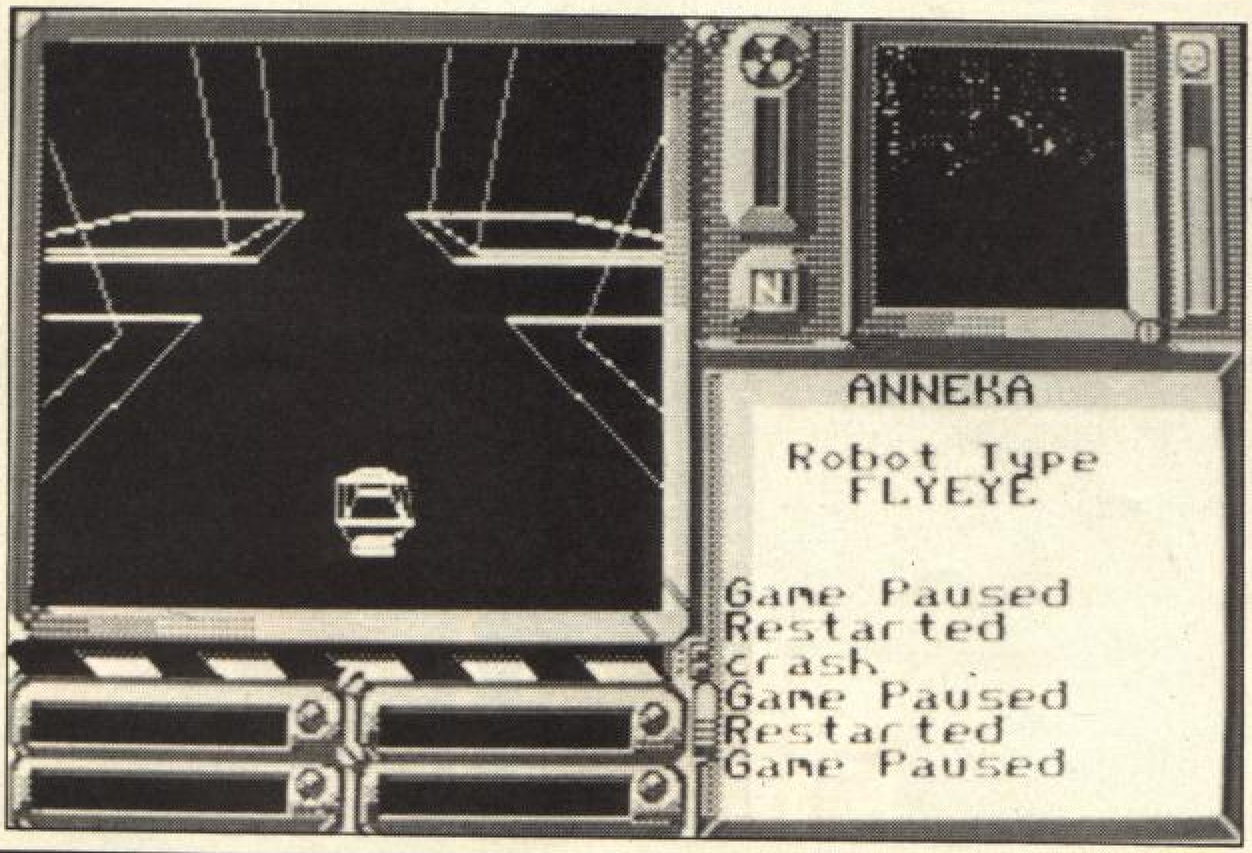


Cholo **is deceptively dull – from glancing at the packaging and reading the novella, I thought it was going to be one hell of a game . . . but sadly it isn't. After a few plays I grew tired of the sluggish graphics and control method, and bored with the tedious exploration involved. There's a fair bit to do, but not enough variety and absorbing action. I wouldn't consider buying** Cholo **– unless you're very rich and enjoy slow, unrewarding games.**



A ship in the harbour, as seen from the Flyeye. Ships can be boarded by using a teleport pad (the small white blob) at the edge of the jetty

A Flyeye Robot's view of a robot guard . . .



PRESENTATION 79%
Well packaged with a fairly interesting novella – however, there are a few annoying niggles, and the save function doesn't work properly.

GRAPHICS 68%
Occasionally confusing vector graphics which fail to convince.

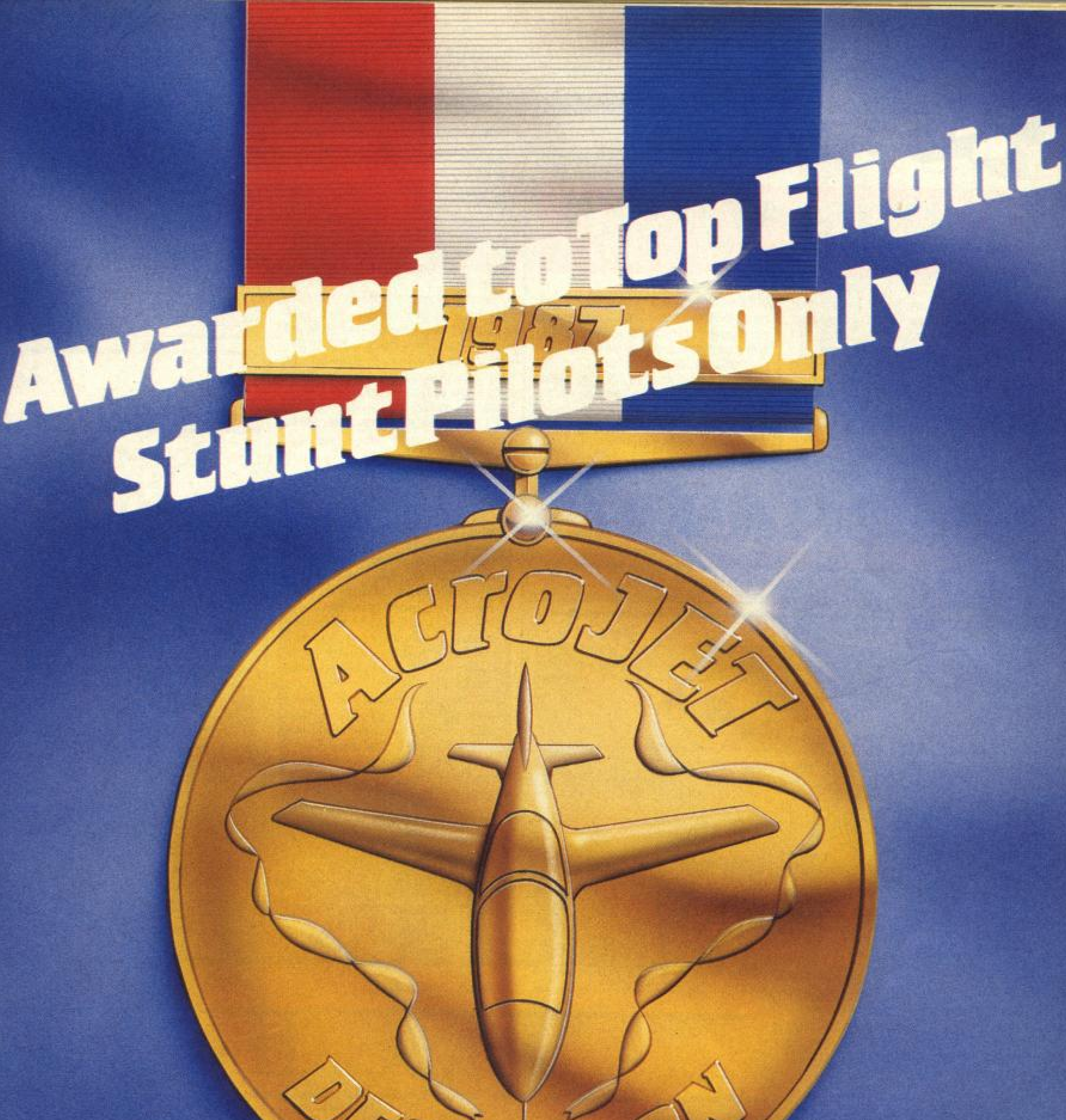
SOUND 48%
No music, but reasonable spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 53%
Not terribly easy to get into – when all else fails, read the instructions. Thoroughly.

LASTABILITY 73%
It'll take some time time to explore the whole city, and even longer to solve the game – perseverance is the order of the day.

VALUE 44%
A high price to pay for slick packaging and a mediocre game.

OVERALL 62%
An intriguing idea, let down by slow and more often than not unrewarding gameplay.



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MICRO PROSE

SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

SHOCKWAY RIDER

Faster Than Light, £8.95 cass, £13.95 disk

Nobody walks in the city of the future. Technology has advanced so far that the paths move, while people do nothing more than stand still and wait until they reach their chosen destination. This modern Metropolis is hardly paradise though, its streets are dangerous – and its moving pathways even worse! Not everyone's a criminal however, in fact you're the very opposite – Greg 'Cobra' Follis, the world's toughest vigilante (with the world's most terrifying sideburns). Taking it upon yourself to clean up the city's sidewalks, you decide to start by sanitising the eight levels of moving pathway.

The circular pedestrian pathway is divided into three parallel sections which run at different speeds in the same direction. The walkways are seen in perspective, with the characters changing size as they move 'in' and 'out' of the screen.

The objective is to complete the circuit within a set time limit, killing as many characters as possible. Fists can be used initially, but the stationary pathways alongside are littered with bricks or spheres which are far more effective. Extra lives can be obtained by collecting objects or shooting innocent bystanders – depending on the level. For example: on Level One, an extra life is awarded for shooting five bystanders, while collecting seven mailbags does the trick on Level Two.

Having completed a circuit, the player automatically progresses to the next level. Being sensible as well as hard, you tackle the walkways in order of increasing danger – so as you go on there are more bad guys to flatten and more obstacles to avoid.

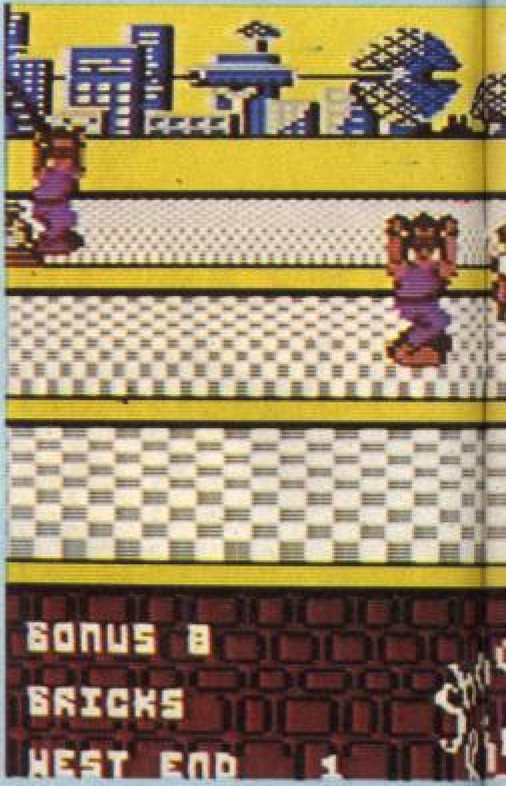
Future City's thugs are slick, and down on Moving Mean Street they're identifiable by their pink, cut-off T-shirts and natty shades. But don't be fooled by apparently innocent commuters and passers-by; that frail-looking granny may turn into a mugger at any time. The safest bet is to kill everyone in sight!

Anyone for a brick sandwich?





In essence, Shockway Rider is hostile hop-scotch played on three moving levels. It doesn't look particularly inspiring, but the concept is commendably original, and has been superbly executed to produce a gorgeous game. Progress is entirely skill dependant – there's no real fixed pattern, and while one game will go incredibly well, another can go disastrously wrong. There's a thin line between addiction and frustration, and the programmers have got it just right – congratulations to all involved.

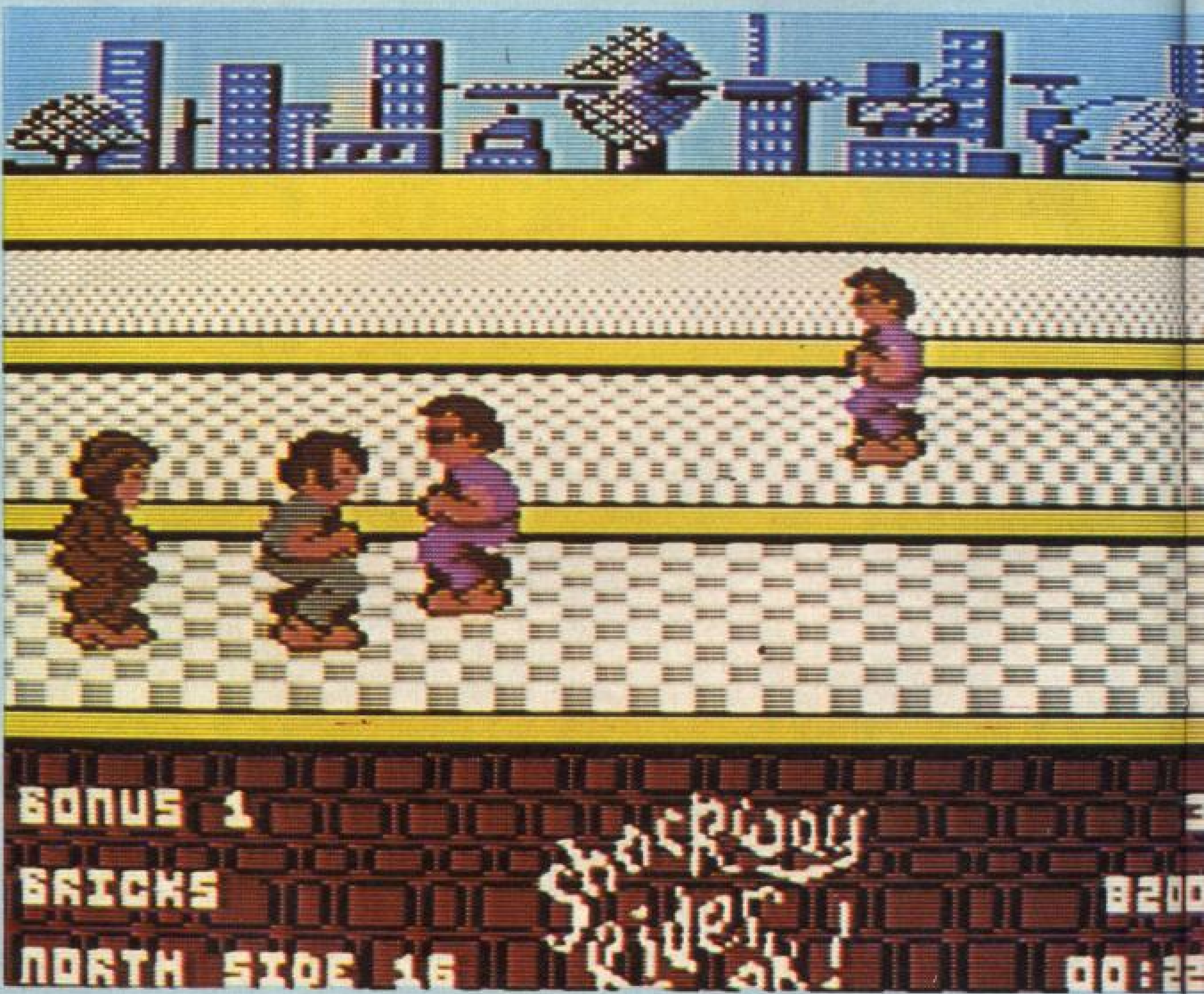


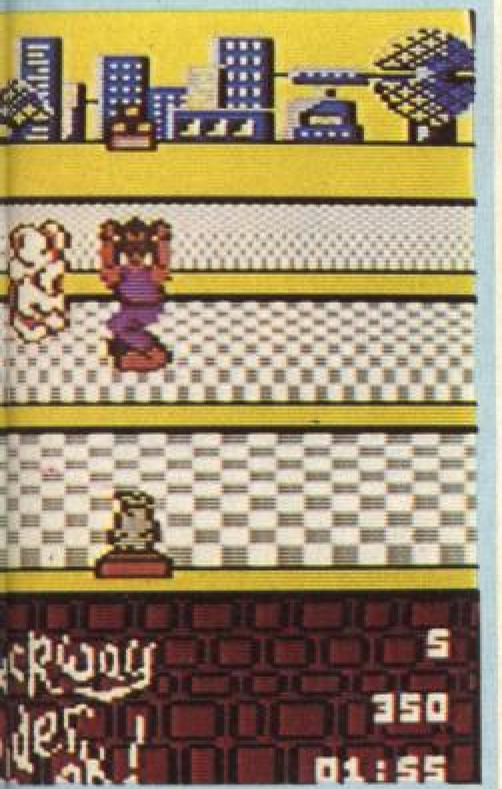
Our hero loses his head, and the triumphant thugs raise their arms in delight . . .



Don't walk: boogie! Mug the muggers and soft-shoe shuffle the walkways of the future! Shockway Rider is one of those strange concepts that only see the light of day because computers exist. It's fun to play, addictive with a capital 'A' and amazingly frustrating. The music initially sounds the sort of superfluous, boppy pap we have to endure every Sunday, but once you get into it . . . it's brilliant – I couldn't play without it! Don't be a lemming and follow the gullible hordes who rush out and buy the latest big name licence – try this original and refreshing product and find out just how brilliant computer programs can be!

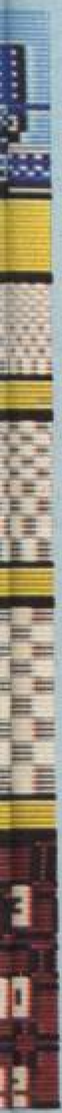
An evil thug and a seemingly harmless granny close in for the kill . . . Who ever said sideburns were out for 87?







Unusual but playable games are few and far between these days – and Shockway Rider certainly falls into this category. The concept is very simple, but it has an oddly addictive quality – marginally offset by the lack of any real variety between levels. The presentation is polished, with a thumping good soundtrack and one of the weirdest title screens I've ever seen. Not really an essential purchase, but interesting nonetheless.



PRESENTATION 97%
Simple but effective title screen, useful on-screen information, plus a demo mode, a practice option, a pause mode and a restart feature.

GRAPHICS 83%
Large, chunky but functional sprites, with effective parallax scrolling.

SOUND 84%
The choice between a few neat spot FX and a suitably lively Rob Hubbard soundtrack.

HOOKABILITY 93%
Simplistic, but highly appealing and addictive gameplay.

LASTABILITY 81%
Lacking variety, but playable and compulsive nevertheless.

VALUE 81%
Marginally overpriced, but certainly worthwhile.

OVERALL 86%
An original and deceptively playable game – and a worthy *Light Force* follow-up to boot.

AFTERMATH

Power House, £1.99 cass, disk, joystick or keys

Saurans Rule OK! Oh no they don't . . . there's still one stubborn fighter pilot who won't accept defeat – there's always one, isn't there? This particular pilot is suffering from severe megalomania, and has decided to pit his fleet of three airborne assault vehicles against the entire Sauran invasion fleet.



As Xevious **was my all-time favourite arcade game, I am always keen to see any clones. Unfortunately,** Aftermath **is dire. The movement of the main ship is very slow, while the aliens happily whizz around at top speed. This makes play decidedly annoying, as you can easily respond to approaching ships, but you can't move fast enough to avoid the oncoming doom. The whole shooting match is graphically uninteresting – the backgrounds and sprites are quite detailed but basically uninspiring. Even at two quid I can't really see anybody being too thrilled over this.**

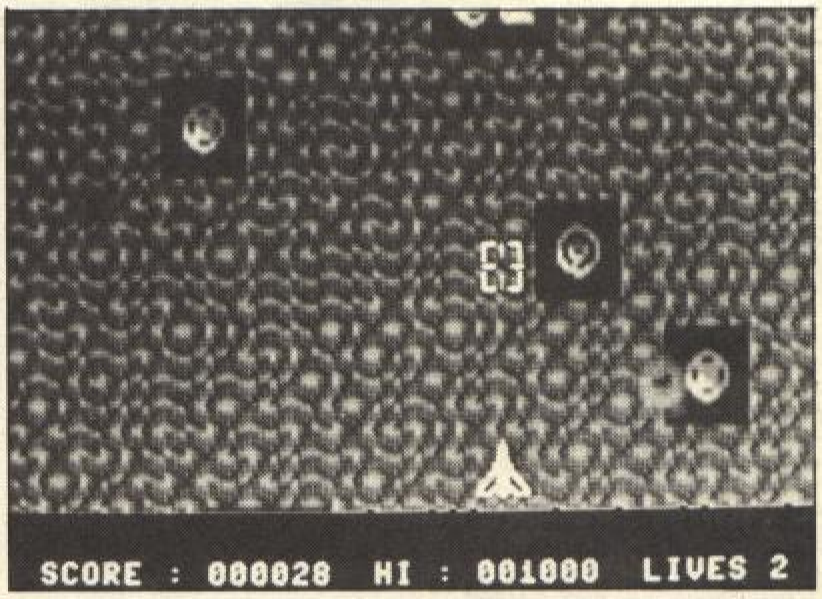
The action takes place over a horizontally scrolling backdrop. Your ship sits at the bottom of the screen and is manoeuvrable within the entire screen area. Sauran craft emerge from the top of the screen and fly downwards, spitting deadly laser fire. Contact with either ship or shot spells doom, and one of the fleet becomes history. However, your craft has an offensive armoury and can fire missiles at the oncoming enemy – killing them instantly if a hit strikes home.

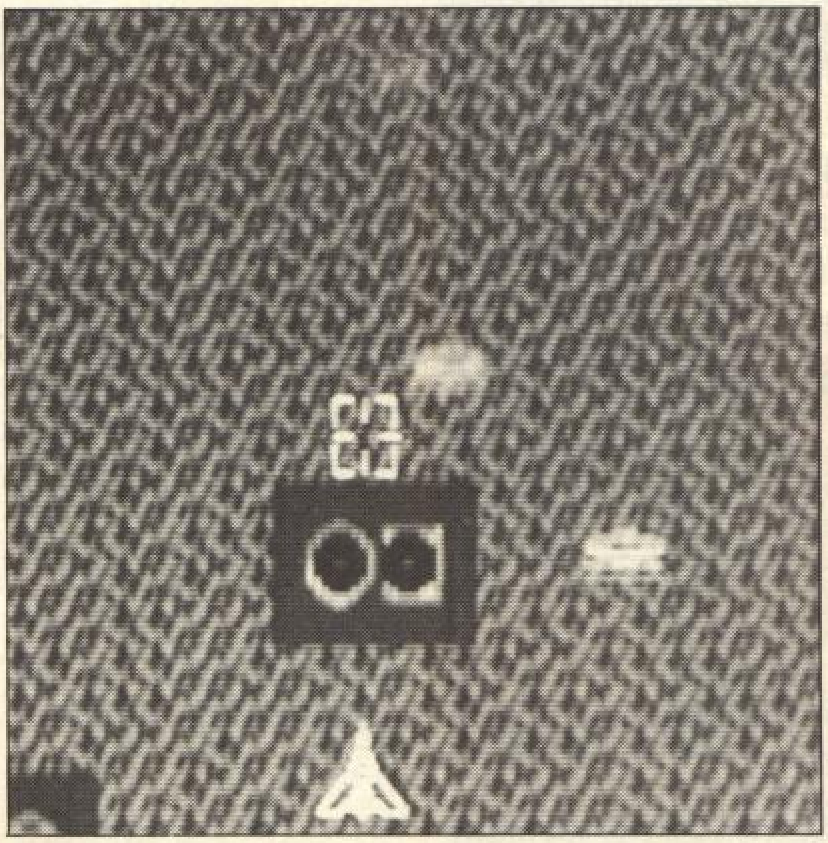
Ground targets are destroyed by bombing – line up the crosshairs at the front of the space fighter, pull back on the joystick and press the fire button to send a deadly incendiary device hurtling towards the ground. The majority of ground installations are harmless, but occasionally one may spit a missile in your general direction.

The Sauran craft become more and more aggressive as the mission progresses. It's not all bad news though – an extra life is earned for every 2,000 points scored.



And what seems like the millionth Xevious **clone vertically scrolls its way into my life . . . and straight out again without making any sort of impact. There's no variety – shooting the aliens as they come down the screen is all there is to it. It wouldn't be so bad if the alien attack patterns differed from screen to screen, but they don't, and it all becomes very predictable after a few goes. The long waits which have to be endured before play begins only add frustration to the tedium; when you die, watching 'GAME OVER' scroll slowly down the screen is infuriating. If you see this on the shelf, just scroll on.**





PRESENTATION 71%
A simple title screen and a comprehensive series of options, but some annoying delays during play.

GRAPHICS 31%
Simplistic and very bland.

SOUND 19%
The few nauseous spot effects fail to do their job.

HOOKABILITY 31%
The straightforward action doesn't captivate for long.

LASTABILITY 19%
Severely lacking variety and excitement – and any addictive qualities.

VALUE 38%
One of the cheapest vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups around, but by no means the best.

OVERALL 27%
Another mediocre addition to the fastest growing genre this side of the Indian Ocean.

WERNER

Ariolasoft, £9.95 cass, joystick only

Werner is a German cartoon character whose antics are based on those of Rotger Feldmann, an infamous biker. The computer version of Werner's adventures comprises four independently loaded arcade-style programs, in which he builds a motorbike, travels to a party, goes on a 'panic tour' and diddles (plays dice).

The first section depicts Werner's assembly of a customised motorcycle. The prospective bike builder stands in the lower half of the screen, with the upper portion containing two windows – one displaying motorcycle components and the other showing 12 bottles of beer. Left and right movements of the joystick scroll through the motorbike components – frames, wheels, seats, engines and exhaust pipes – with the player choosing pieces by pulling down on the stick. Choosing a correct part results in it being placed next to Werner at the bottom of the screen. An incorrect choice results in the removal of a bottle. The program has to be reloaded if all of Werner's beer is used before the motorcycle is complete.

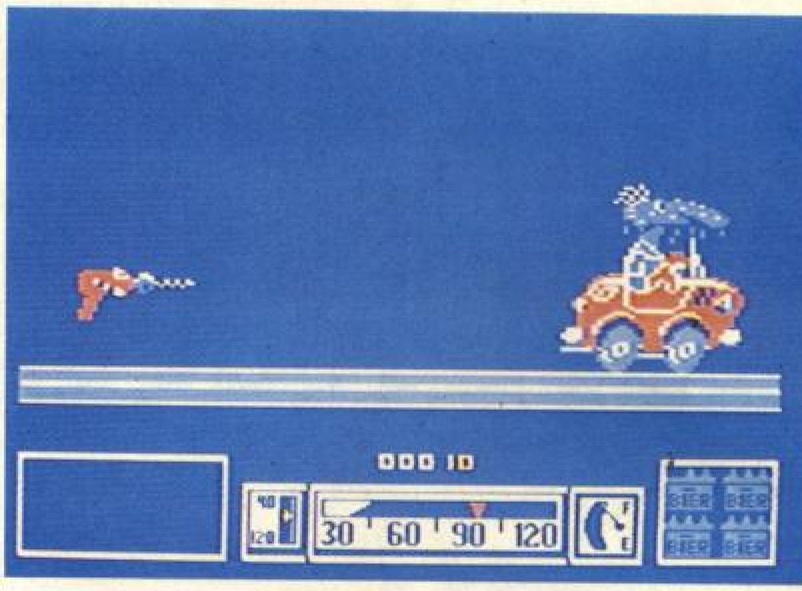
Next comes a hazardous car journey as Werner tries to take four crates of beer to a party. The route is inhabited by four types of horror who have taken a strong dislike to our hero and must be avoided. The screen displays a side-on view of Werner's car as his enemies emerge from in front and behind. One of Werner's 12 bottles is removed on contact with a hostile – and if all of his bottles disappear . . . well, there's no point in him going to the party.

The third section follows Werner's 'panic tour'. The same side-on view and control method as used in the previous section applies here, while Werner travels as far along the highway as he can, avoiding numerous strange objects as he goes.

The final game, 'diddling', is an alternative dice game. Player One throws the dice and takes a peek, not letting anyone else see the dice. The second player is given the dice and attempts to equal or beat the first player's score. When the throw is taken, Player Two tells the third player his equal or better score and Player Three has to decide whether Player Two is lying or not. If Player Three reckons that Two is telling the truth the dice are thrown – however, if Three thinks the opposite, the dice are revealed and a beer mat is awarded to whoever is wrong. The dice are then thrown by player three, and handed onto the next person to continue the action . . . confused? – you should be!



This is definitely the strangest game I have ever seen. There are four sub-games within the package, tenuously linked by this weird Werner character (apparently based on a real life person – the guy must be a mutant!). The four sections are all quite tedious and the lack of any real playability is not helped by the instructions, which have been roughly translated from German and are not terribly helpful. The sections look very nice and sound reasonable, but any gameplay is sadly missing.



Hotly pursued by a vicious Black and Decker, Werner hotfoots it to a party



What initially spoils Werner **is the badly written instructions – they don't give away much about how to play the game. It would appear that they have been badly translated from the German originals. The graphics are well designed and humourous, but this doesn't make up for the lack of exciting gameplay. The four sections aren't particularly brilliant, and their potential hasn't been exploited to the full. The whole thing appears to be nothing more than a mish-mash of a few good ideas strung together to produce a couple of poor games.**

Werner diddles while Rome burns . . . but watch carefully, as our handsome hero has been known to cheat a little





This is so ANNOYING! Werner **is supposed to be funny, but it's not – not even for a nano-second! Instead it's mind-numbingly boring and frustrating. The first program is the only semi-decent one of the four – and that is completely ruined because you have to reload every time you make a mistake. The next two are pointless and repetitive, and the fourth is simply stupid. The instructions are unreadable, indecipherable and totally incomprehensible. The graphics are colourful and quite large, but when they're tagged onto a program as totally awful as this they're not worth a light. Don't squander your money on this waste of bytes.**

PRESENTATION 27%
Incomprehensible instructions, and a terrible loading system.

GRAPHICS 71%
Big, bold and colourful characters, but little or no backdrops.

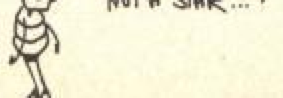
SOUND 29%
A few weak spot effects and jingles.

HOOKABILITY 32%
All the games are very obscure – the confusing instructions don't help the player get into the action.

LASTABILITY 8%
Four unplayable and extremely limited programs which soon repel.

VALUE 3%
Ridiculously overpriced for such trite, unplayable drivel.

OVERALL 10%
Original, but pointless. Give it a miss.



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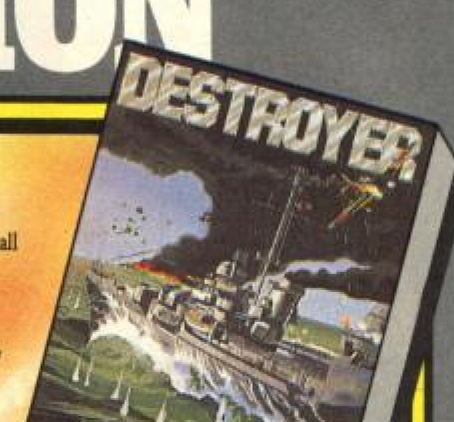
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SURFACE TENSION



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Will it be the twin 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns? Or the 5" leadspewers aft? Depth charges or torpedos? Autopilot or guts? Any choice could be your last, so make it good.

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ZZAPTIONNAIRE
Help Us To Help You!

Yes, it's another one of those psuedo-nosey form things. But Questionnaires have their uses – we want to know what you think about ZZAP! and the additions we have planned, and whether you want us to change anything. Perhaps you like things as they are – it's up to you to tell us.

Please fill out this form to the best of your ability, then send it (or a photocopy if you don't want to cut up your ZZAP!) to **ZZAPTIONNAIRE, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ** to arrive here before May 14th 1987

The first form drawn out of Mailbag after this date earns the sender £50 worth of software of his or her choice, plus a ZZAP! cap, T-Shirt and Sweatshirt. The next four forms drawn earn their senders £10 worth of software, plus a cap and T-Shirt.

Thanking you in advance for your help . . .

Gary Penn

Gary Penn

NITTY GRITTY

SEX

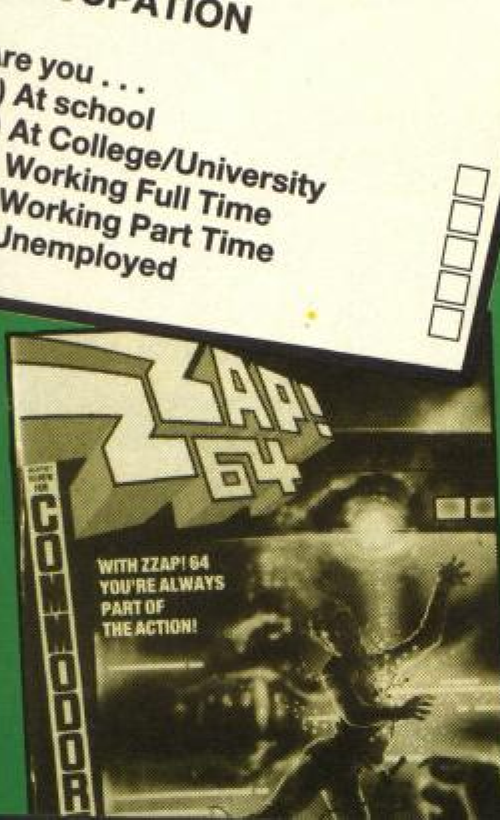
Are you . . .
- MALE ☐
- FEMALE ☐

AGE

How old are you?

OCCUPATION

Are you . . .
- A) At school ☐
- B) At College/University ☐
- C) Working Full Time ☐
- D) Working Part Time ☐
- E) Unemployed ☐



MONEY MATTERS

On average, how much do you spend every week on computer games?
- A) £2-£5 ☐
- B) £6-£10 ☐
- C) £11-20 ☐
- D) More Than £20 ☐

Have you purchased a utility in the LAST six months?
- YES ☐
- NO ☐

If YES, please state type . . .

Do you intend to purchase a utility in the NEXT six months?
- YES ☐
- NO ☐

If YES, please state type . . .

Have you purchased a peripheral in the LAST six months?
- YES ☐
- NO ☐

If YES, please state type . . .

Do you intend to purchase a peripheral in the NEXT six months?
- YES ☐
- NO ☐

If YES, please state type . . .

Do you intend to buy a new computer in the next six months?
- YES ☐
- NO ☐

If YES, please state make of computer you intend to buy . . .

What is the major influence on your decision to buy a computer game (please indicate in order of priority 1-6)
- A) Friend's Recommendation ☐
- B) Magazine Review ☐
- C) Advertising ☐
- D) Author ☐
- E) Producer ☐
- F) Price ☐

YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ . . .

When did you first buy ZZAP!?

How many issues have you bought since then?
ALL
SOME
If SOME, How many?

On average, how many other people read your copy of ZZAP!?

How do you get ZZAP!?
Subscription
Reserved or delivered by newsagent
Off the shelf

In order of preference, which other computer magazines do you buy or read?
Commodore Computing International
Computer Gamer
Commodore Horizons
Commodore User
Computer & Video Games
Popular Computing Weekly
Popular Computing World
Other (Please Specify)

IN GENERAL . . .

Please award marks out of ten for each of the following features in ZZAP!
Advertisements
Charts
Competitions
Compunet
Editorial
News
Previews
Reviews
Rrap
Scorelord
Money Saving Offers
Subscription Offers
Tips
White Wizard
ZZAP!Back
ZZAP!Stick

Any comments about any or all of the above?

SOFTWARE COVERAGE

Please rate ZZAP!'s coverage of software accordingly
News
Previews
Reviews

REVIEWS

Are the reviews detailed enough?

Are the reviews long enough?

Are there enough screen shots?

Are the comments detailed enough?

How often do you agree with ratings?
Always
More Often Than Not
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

Would you like to see the ratings system changed or improved?
YES
NO
If YES, how? . . .

Do you use ZZAP! as a source of reference when buying software?
Always
Sometimes
Never

Which of the following would you OBJECT to seeing in ZZAP!?
C16 coverage?
Amiga coverage?
More Arcade coverage?
Hardware Reviews
Programming Tips

What do you think of the standard of ZZAP!'s covers?
GREAT
OK
RUBBISH

What do you think of features such as Tamara Knight and Terminal Man?
GREAT
OK
RUBBISH

Would you be interested in seeing the return of the Challenge?
YES
NO
If YES, which format appeals to you most . . .
Reader Vs Reviewer
Reader Vs Reader

Which reviewer do you most often find yourself in agreement with?
Richard Eddy
Steve Jarratt
Gary Penn
Julian Rignall
Paul Sumner

AND FINALLY . . .

Is there anything constructive you wish to add?

Name ______________________
Address ____________________
____
____
____
T-Shirt size ________________

SUN STAR

CRL £7.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only.

A strange, alien grid system has been found in a remote region of deep space. While carrying out the usual observations, your ship's hyperdrive suddenly kicks in, hurling you into the heart of the network. Miraculously, the ship remains intact, but you are left stranded in the grid, with no obvious means of escape . . .



Enjoyable, challenging and addictive – that's Sun Star. **The problem is that the feeling doesn't last very long – mainly because there's not enough variety. The 3D effect is very good indeed, and it's quite exhilarating to whizz down the gridways in hot pursuit of a crystal. It's a shame that the novelty wears off really – if there had been anything flying around to break up the crystal chasing it could have been quite good. As it stands it's only fair, providing a couple of day's entertainment before being destined to spend the rest of its life on a shelf . . .**

The system is occupied by disrupter pulses, moving randomly around the grid. When hit by a laser blast, pulses automatically jump to another part of the grid, leaving a green energy crystal in their wake. The crystal then moves around on its own and is available



Sun Star **is an unusual game to play, being a strange blend of** Beamrider **and** Z. **The graphics are good, but while the author has gone to great lengths to recreate the correct view from the cockpit, you inevitably end up playing by the two small scanner screens alone. The action can get quite hectic at times – due in part to the disorientating control method, which takes a little while to get used to. A smaller price tag might have been in order, especially when you consider the lack of variety. I can't see** Sun Star **providing any real lasting interest – which is a shame, as it's initially quite engrossing.**

for collection. Leave the crystal uncollected and it eventually burns out, destroying any crystals already taken.

The upper part of the screen shows a pilot's eye view of the grid in full perspective, with obstacles and other features represented by



coloured squares moving in relation to your ship. Below this is a full



Sun Star **is fairly original, but simple and rather tedious with it. The main display can get very confusing, and the scanner at the bottom of the screen does little to help. I didn't find it remotely enjoyable to play, and there was nothing about it to draw me back. At times it felt as if I wasn't getting anywhere, and the whole thing struck me as being totally pointless. Basically, it's not up to much and I wouldn't even consider recommending it.**

screen scanner, giving the layout of the the current grid system, and the position of the disrupter pulses. A local scanner lies to the left, showing any objects in your immediate vicinity.

A central information panel displays the current ship status, including the amount of energy remaining and the number of crystals obtained. An alarm sounds when the ship's energy is running low, warning of your impending doom.

When a full complement of ten crystals has been amassed, the Hyperwarp Cell is then approached. This is protected by a yellow, obstruction pulse wall, which encircles the cell and can only be crossed by passing through a small moving entrance. Once inside, a single laser blast to the cell warps you to the next, more complex grid, where the same procedure is carried out.



PRESENTATION 73%
Adequate instructions and useful on-screen information.

GRAPHICS 69%
Reasonable control panel, and a bizarre, but quite colourful and very effective main display.

SOUND 38%
No music, and the spot effects are nothing special.

HOOKABILITY 71%
It takes time to familiarise yourself with the odd control method, but the action is quite addictive thereafter.

LASTABILITY 47%
Very little difference between the levels, but still quite fun.

VALUE 53%
Would have made more impact had it been at a budget price.

OVERALL 56%
A unusual concept, which sadly lack variety to make it something special.

CRUCIAL COMPILAT

The appearance of compilations during the Christmas period is as traditional as the Festive Season itself. A collection of ageing, or relatively obscure software, which represents a bargain for most consumers. But considering the quality of the majority of recent software, it would surely be more sensible for software houses to release a compilation consisting of four or five average-to-good programs for the same price as a single, uninspiring title? In a potentially similar vein: Imagine put Mikie on their Konami Coin-Op Hits compilation, Mikro-Gen did the same with Battle of the Planets and their Classic Collection, Durell are releasing Turbo Esprit on their Big Four compilation, and Elite are putting Duet onto the Hit Pack. What do these titles have in common? This is the first time they have seen the light of day – and through a compilation. This does tend to suggest that these games are below full-price standard, but even so, it's an attractive addition. Who knows? We may yet see the 64 version of Ocean's Street Hawk . . . on a compilation.

Anyway, here is a round-up of compilations past and present – all of which are still available. Hopefully, this will prove an adequate source of reference . . .

Obviously there's not much point in rating the Graphics and Sound of a compilation as a whole – so, taking into consideration the quality of the packaging and instructions – and of course the games, a cross between a Presentation, Hookability, Lastability and Value rating is provided in the form of an Overall comparison percentage and comment.

THEY SOLD A MILLION

£9.95 cassette

Contents:

Beach Head (US Gold/Access) – Bruce and Roger Carver's classic multi-stage shoot 'em up, often imitated but never surpassed. Quite playable, but it looks and feels so dated.

Daley Thompson's Decathlon – Ocean's best-selling, joystick waggling sports simulation features eight events, including 100m sprint, high jump, and 1500m. Considered by some to be good for its time, but unlikely to impress today.

Staff Of Karnath – Ultimate's first release for the 64 proved something of a disappointment after the quality of their Spectrum product, but it sold well enough. An atmospheric arcade adventure, but the puzzles are annoyingly senseless.

Jet Set Willy (Software Projects) – a classic Spectrum platform game which never really hit it off on the 64 – not at all surprising, as it looks awful and plays marginally better.

OVERALL 51%

They Sold A Million ? They may well have done between them, but that was a long time ago, and across many different formats . . . A not so impressive collection of four ageing classics. Difficult to get hold off, but hardly worth the effort.

THEY SOLD A MILLION II

£9.95 cassette

Contents:

Bruce Lee (US Gold/Datasoft) – a fairly simple, but playable platform game with minimal beat 'em up overtones, and the master of martial arts' name slapped on top for good measure.

Entombed – set in an Egyptian tomb, this is Ultimate's best arcade adventure to date, but still not representative of their talent.

Match Point – the 64 conversion of Psion's classic Spectrum tennis simulation. Still the best available.

Match Day (Ocean) – a graphically crude football simulation, which sorely lacks the addictive qualities of the Spectrum original.

OVERALL 77%

They Sold A Million? It seems unlikely . . . but that's beside the point: this is a considerable improvement over its predecessor, and is only let down by the presence of *Match Day*. Worthy of consideration however.

THEY SOLD A MILLION III

£9.95 cassette

Contents:

Fighter Pilot (Digital Integration) – a simulation of flying the US F-15 fighter, in yet another uninspiring Spectrum conversion.

Ghostbusters (Activision) – not much of a game in its own right, but one of the better film tie-ins nonetheless.

Kung-Fu Master (US Gold) – a fair conversion of the arcade beat 'em up, with crude graphics but sufficient playability.

Rambo (Ocean) – an appalling multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up with one redeeming feature: outstanding music from Martin Galway.

OVERALL 62%

They Sold A Million III is inferior to its immediate predecessor, but offers reasonable variety and value for money.

ZZAP! SIZZLERS I

Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cassette

Contents:

Thing On A Spring (Gremlin Graphics) – an original, but very demanding platform game with 'cute' graphics and a lively Rob Hubbard soundtrack.

Dropzone (US Gold) – an excellent variation on the *Defender / StarGate* theme, and one of the best shoot 'em ups available for the 64.

Wizard's Lair (Bubble Bus) – a fair to middling maze game cum shoot 'em up cum arcade adventure.

Who Dares Wins II (Alligata) – Steve Evans' vertically scrolling shoot 'em up. Generally regarded as similar to, but marginally better than, *Commando*.

OVERALL 79%

Good, solid entertainment, but only *Dropzone* doesn't show its age.

ZZAP! SIZZLERS II

Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cassette

Contents:

Z (Rino) – Chris Butler's superb multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up, loosely based on *Time Pilot 84*, with a sprinkling of the arcade game *Sinistar* thrown in for good measure.

Monty On The Run (Gremlin Graphics) – an ageing, but reasonable platform game in the classic mould, with minimal arcade adventure overtones.

Bounder (Gremlin Graphics) – a neat variation on the platform theme, featuring ten devilishly designed scrolling levels, viewed from above.

Starquake (Bubble Bus) – another Steve Crow platform game cum shoot 'em up cum arcade adventure.

OVERALL 82%

Not bad at all – *Z* wasn't quite Sizzler, but *Bounder* was a Gold Medal and is adequate compensation. One of the classier compilations.

STAR GAMES I

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cassette

Contents:

Barry McGuigan's Boxing – dispose of 20 opponents before taking on Barry himself, in Activision's boxing simulation. Very possibly the best available.

Rescue On Fractalus (Activision/Lucasfilm) – a simplistic 3D shoot 'em up, which lacks depth, but is atmospheric and addictive.

Way of the Tiger (Gremlin Graphics) – a tedious oriental beat 'em up, loosely based on the Fighting Fantasy book of the same name.

Beach Head II (US Gold/Access) – good for its time, but unlike the Over The Top presentation, and the glorious visual and aural effects,



IONS COMPARISONS

the gameplay has dated considerably since its release.

OVERALL 74%

This is Gremlin's first compilation release for the 64 which doesn't bear the ZZAP! Sizzler logo – possibly something to do with the fact that only three of the four games were Sizzlers over a year ago. Represents good value though.

NOW GAMES I

Virgin, £8.95 cassette

Contents:

Lords of Midnight (Beyond) – a competent conversion of Mike Singleton's classic strategy game, which first saw the light of day on the Spectrum.
Brian Bloodaxe (The Edge) – a badly executed and generally unremarkable platform game.
Strangeloop (Virgin) – atmospheric, but simplistic and limited arcade adventure action.
Pyjamarama (Mikro-Gen) – an innovative arcade adventure, which would be in a class of its own if it wasn't for Mikro-Gen releasing *Everyone's A Wally* and *Herbert's Dummy Run*.
Arabian Nights (Interceptor) – impressive for its time, but the seven platform-filled screens now appear crude and aged, as does the speech.
Falcon Patrol II (Virgin) – Steve Lee's neat, horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, recently re-released at a budget price on the Bug Byte label.

OVERALL 67%

Some variation, and despite a few holes, provides adequate entertainment.

NOW GAMES II

Virgin, £8.95 cassette

Contents:

Airwolf (Elite) – an addictive multi-directional scrolling exploration game, which seems to have little to do with the television series.
Tir Na Nog (Gargoyle Games) – a unique arcade adventure with lots to do and explore, but it never really captured the imagination of 64 owners.
Cauldron – Palace Software's spooky arcade adventure still compares favourably with many recent releases.
Chuckie Egg (A 'n' F) – awful graphics hide a highly playable platform game.
World Cup (Artic) – a tedious football simulation with crude graphics and feel.

OVERALL 80%

The inclusion of *World Cup* lets the package down, but otherwise this is an unusual, and worthwhile cross-section of game types.

NOW GAMES III

Virgin, £9.95 cassette

Contents:

Nick Faldo Plays The Open (Argus Press Softwai e) – one of the first golf simulations to appear on the 64, and it shows.
Sorcery (Virgin) – a mediocre arcade adventure.
Code Name Mat II (Domark) – Derek Brewster's tepid *Star Raiders* derivative.
Everyone's A Wally (Mikro-Gen) – similar to *Pyjamarama*, but with five different characters to control.
View To A Kill (Domark) – appropriately poor film tie-in.

OVERALL 46%

Varied, but the sum of its parts doesn't exceed the whole.

10 COMPUTER HITS I

Beau Jolly, £9.95 double cassette pack

(£8.95 direct from Beau Jolly, 29 A Bell Street, Reigate, Surrey RH2 7AD)

Contents:

Brian Jacks Superstar Challenge (Martech) – another average joystick waggling sports simulation, loosely tied-in to the once-popular television series.
Ancipital (Llamasoft) – typically original, brilliant, and bizarre, shoot 'em up.
Seaside Special (Task Set) – collect radioactive seaweed from Rotaway Beach and throw it at nasty politicians in this tame political satire.
Jinn Genie (Micro-Mega) – inspired but sadly poor mixture of themes with an Eastern flavour.
Special Operations – an ancient and forgettable release from Lothlorien.
Harrier Attack (Durell) – simplistic horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, in some ways derivative of Virgin's *Falcon Patrol*, but nowhere near as polished.
Hustler (Bubble Bus) – an ageing but playable pool simulation.
Chuckie Egg (A 'n' F) – see *Now Games II* for details.
Space Pilot – Anirog's weak interpretation of the arcade game *Time Pilot*.
Sorcerer Of Claymorgue Castle – a formulaic Scott Adams text adventure, with a limited parser, vocabulary and descriptions.

OVERALL 68%

A good package, despite some pitfalls.

10 COMPUTER HITS II

Beau Jolly, £9.95 double cassette pack

(£8.95 direct from Beau Jolly)

Contents:

Super Pipeline II – Task Set's polished and playable sequel to *Pipeline*, which Sizzled way back in ZZAP! Issue Two.
Mutant Monty (Artic) – an amusing (but essentially dull) blend of styles and characters.
Henry's House (English Software) – a limited, but challenging eight screen platform game.
Gribbly's Day Out (Hewson) – guide Gribbly Grobbly through 16 hazardous levels of Blabgor, in Andrew Braybrook's wonderfully bizarre platform game.
Snooker (Vision) – an abysmal simulation with unconvincing ball movement.
Mama Llama (Llamasoft) – Jeff Minter at his most bizarre. Over The Top in all respects, and only recommended to hardcore fans.
Raskel (Budgie) – reasonable horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, with overtones of Jeff Minter's *Sheep in Space*.
Aqua Racer (Bubble Bus) – *Pole Position* takes to the water.
Frenzy – little more than a simple, uninteresting shoot 'em up.
Circus (Channel 8) – dated text adventure with graphics, and a limited parser, vocabulary and location descriptions.

OVERALL 78%

Once again, the content is varied, a little weak at times, but generally worthy of consideration. ▶





CRUCIAL COMPILAT

10 COMPUTER HITS III

Beau Jolly, £9.95 double cassette pack
(£8.95 direct from Beau Jolly)
Contents:
Geoff Capes Strongman Challenge (Martech) – six awful muscle-busting events; including tug-o-war, barrel lifting and oriental wrestling.
Elidon (Orpheus) – a simplistic, but mildly addictive and extremely pretty arcade adventure cum exploration game.
Blagger Goes To Hollywood (Alligata) – a dull collect 'em up, and a poor follow-up to Tony Crowther's *Son of Blagger*.
Cauldron (Palace Software) – see *Now Games II* for details.
3D Lunattack (Hewson) – Andrew Braybrook's first game for the 64 – a conversion of an old Steve Turner 3D Spectrum shoot 'em up.
Crazy Comets (Martech) – decent shoot 'em up by Simon Nicol, based loosely on the arcade game *Mad Planets*.
Dynamite Dan (Mirrorsoft) – classic platform action with many novel twists, which never made its mark . . . despite being one of the best games of its type.
Herbert's Dummy Run (Mikro-Gen) – a tame arcade adventure in the *Pyjamarama* mould.
Attack Of The Mutant Camels (Llamasoft) – Jeff Minter's simplistic but playable shoot 'em up, derivative of an old Atari 2600 cartridge-based game – Parker's *Empire Strikes Back*.
Basildon Bond (Probe) – a paper-thin arcade adventure, supposedly featuring the many guises of Russ Abbott.
OVERALL 75%
A strange collection which has its ups and downs, but comes recommended.

FIVE STAR GAMES

Beau Jolly, £9.95 double cassette pack
(£8.95 direct from Beau Jolly)
Contents:
Spindizzy (Electric Dreams) – Paul Shirley's excellent variation on the *Marble Madness* theme.
Scarabaeus (Ariolasoft) – a brilliant, highly atmospheric, 3D first-person perspective maze game, with unique puzzles to solve.
Zoids (Martech) – the DIY robot toys licensed to good effect, in the Electronic Pencil Company's fabulous strategy game cum shoot 'em up, with a suitably powerful Rob Hubbard soundtrack.
Batalyx (Llamasoft) – six superb sub-games, an exhibition of Jeff Minter at his best.
Equinox (Mikro-Gen) – neat shoot 'em up cum arcade adventure.
OVERALL 94%
An outstanding compilation, comprising plenty of instant action and depth.

UNBELIEVABLE ULTIMATE

US Gold, £9.99 cassette
Contents:
Entombed – see *They Sold A Million II* for details.
Staff Of Karnath – see *They Sold A Million* for details.
Blackwyche – formulaic Ultimate arcade adventure which takes place on a Marie Celeste-esque ship.
Imhotep – a disastrous horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, with a contrived scenario to cover the cracks.
OVERALL 46%
Unbelievable? Yes – it's unbelievable that their Commodore product never managed to match their outstanding Spectrum releases, especially considering that they flogged their style of arcade adventure to death. Adequate fodder for Pendragon freaks, but chances are that you've already bought them first time around.

ARCADE CLASSICS

US Gold, £9.99 cassette
Contents:
Pac Man – adequate conversion of the aged arcade classic.
Mr Do! – another adequate conversion of another elderly arcade game.
Dig Dug – yet another conversion . . .
Pole Position – another convert, which is flawed, but nonetheless playable.
OVERALL 42%
Competent Datasoft conversions of classic arcade games, which now show their age. With this price tag, the package represents expensive short-term fun.

BIG NAMES BONANZA

(US Gold), £9.99 cassette
Contents:
Fight Night – comical boxing game, featuring a boxer construction kit, but lacking the variety of moves that *Barry McGuigan's Boxing* has to offer.
Forbidden Forest – Paul Norman's eerie and bloody shoot 'em up classic.
Stellar 7 – an improved *Battlezone* variant, with slow vector graphics.
Talledega – American ace driver, Richard Petty, endorses this bog-standard racing game.
OVERALL 60%
The content is dated, but the level of enjoyment just about makes up for this.

SHOOT EM UPS

US Gold, £9.99 cassette
Contents:
Super Zaxxon – fairly addictive, but not much of an improvement over the original.
Dropzone – see *ZZAP! Sizzlers I* for details.
Blue Max 2001 – an abysmal sequel to its playable predecessor.
Fort Apocalypse (Synapse) – this has aged badly in the graphics and sound departments, but it features some innovative ideas and plenty of playability.
OVERALL 63%
A surprisingly diverse collection of games with a similar theme. Sadly, *Super Zaxxon* and *Blue Max 2001* lower the tone of a potentially stunning collection.

PLATFORM PERFECTION

US Gold, £9.99 cassette
Contents:
Zorro (Datasoft) – platform action with adventure overtones. Atmospheric, but hardly representative of the swashbuckling swordsman's exploits.
Bruce Lee (Datasoft) – see *They Sold A Million II* for details.
Bounty Bob (Big 5) – a brilliant 25-screen platform game, with glorious presentation and fabulous gameplay.
Ghostchaser (Artworx) – a typical Frank Cohen brainchild, this time set in a haunted house.
OVERALL 70%
Sufficient entertainment for platform freaks, with some beat 'em up and arcade adventure overtones for good measure.

URIDIUM PLUS/ COMPETITION PARADROID

Hewson, £8.95 cassette
Contents:
Uridium Plus – a tweaked version of the *Star Force*-inspired *Uridium*, with the extra features including 15 new Dreadnaughts and new attack patterns.
Paradroid – a double-speed version of Andrew Braybrook's timeless classic, comes complete with a groovy loader.
OVERALL 83%
Only two games for the price of one, but both are outstanding. Hardened Braybrook fans may be a mite disappointed though, as the improvements are too minor to create a lasting challenge.

TIONS COMPARISONS

KONAMI COIN-OP HITS

Imagine, £9.95 double cassette pack, £14.95 disk
Contents:
Hyper Sports – a competent conversion of the joystick waggling arcade game; including swimming, gymnastics and archery.
Mikie – a poor conversion of its arcade parent, albeit with good Martin Galway music and a neat high-score table.
Green Beret – a lovely conversion; tough but addictive.
Yie Ar Kung-Fu – disappointing from an arcade player's point of view, but still a playable conversion.
Ping Pong – fair, but lacks the playability of the original.
OVERALL 84%
The definitive collection of arcade conversions.

YAK'S PROGRESS

Llamasoft, £9.45 double cassette pack, £11.95 diskette
Contents:
Matrix – a sad interpretation of the VIC 20 original, which barely manages to retain the playability.
Laser Zone – a one or two player version of the outstanding VIC 20 shoot 'em up in which the player controls two ships at once. Sadly lacks the feel, graphic ignorance and sound effects of the VIC version, but still a good challenging blast.
Attack of the Mutant Camels – see *10 Computer Hits III* for details.
Revenge of the Mutant Camels – a weird and wonderful sequel to *Attack of the Mutant Camels*.
Hover Bovver – a bizarre scenario which has the player mowing sixteen lawns. Good, clean fun.
Ancipital – see *10 Computer Hits I* for details.
Metagalactic Llamas Battle at the Edge of Time – simplistic but inspired shoot 'em up converted from the VIC 20 3.5K original. Not greatly improved, but still great fun.
Sheep In Space – wonderful variation on the *Defender / StarGate* theme.

OVERALL 90%
A glorious collection comprising eight of Jeff Minter's earlier works. Excellent value, but Minter fans will no doubt own a bulk already, and sadly very few people seem to be on the same wavelength.

HIT PACK

Elite, £9.95 cassette
Contents:
BombJack – a frustratingly flawed conversion of a superb arcade game.
Commando – another flawed conversion, which lacks the class, playability and levels of its arcade counterpart.
Airwolf – see *Now Games II* for details.
Frank Bruno's Boxing – tedious boxing action, based on the arcade game *Punch Out*, with Mr Bruno's name used purely for effect.
OVERALL 49%
One for Elite acolytes only – not much entertainment on offer for anyone else.

CLASSIC COLLECTION

Mikro-Gen, £9.95 cassette
Contents:
Automania – Wally Week, Mikro-Gen's rotund, simpleton hero makes his first appearance in an equally simple platform game, in which he walks and jumps around a garage, avoiding living tools in an attempt to collect pieces of car.
The Witch's Cauldron – an unusual, and somewhat innovative approach to a text adventure with graphics. Fair descriptions, bearable parser, limited vocabulary – solid (albeit unoriginal) plot, good pictures, with 'cute' animated characters – suitable fodder for novice adventurers.
Pyjamarama – see *Now Games I* for details.
Battle Of The Planets – previously unreleased, which is hardly surprising as superb 3D vector graphics have sadly been spoiled by weak gameplay.
OVERALL 48%
A commendably varied collection, but not much lasting entertainment on offer.

AND SOON TO BE RELEASED . . .

SIX PACK

Elite, £9.95 cassette
Contents:
Scooby Doo (Elite) – a weak tie-in, consisting of limited platform and ladders action.
1942 (Elite) – an average conversion of the unremarkable vertically scrolling arcade shoot 'em up.
Fighting Warrior (Melbourne House) – visually and aurally obscene beat 'em up, with gameplay to match.
The Sacred Armour of Antiriad (Palace Software) – Dan Malone's slick, playable arcade adventure with gorgeous graphics.
Jet Set Willy II (Software Projects) – more rooms to negotiate, but not even as good as the original.
Split Personalities (Domark) – a novel variation on the sliding puzzle theme, complete with a few famous faces.
Duet (Elite) – a hybrid of *Commando* and *Gauntlet*, better known as *Commando 86*. We've seen it on the Spectrum, and it looks pretty good – as for the Commodore version . . .

OVERALL
Varied and worthwhile – and if *Duet* is any good, it'll be even better.

THE BIG FOUR

Durell, £9.95 cassette
Contents:
Combat Lynx – an ageing helicopter simulation.
Saboteur – a platform game with minor adventure overtones, and a bit of shooting to boot.
Critical Mass – multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up action which fails to stimulate.
Turbo Esprit – this first person perspective driving game never made it to the 64 in its own right.
OVERALL
Should be available by the time you read this, but it's doubtful that even a competent conversion of *Turbo Esprit* can save this package from obscurity.

NOW GAMES IV

Virgin, £9.95 cassette
Contents:
Dan Dare (Virgin) – Andy Wilson's easy to solve, but highly playable arcade adventure captures the feel this legendary comic book hero.
Back To The Future (Electric Dreams) – a poor film tie-in which sees Marty McFly attempting to unite his future parents.
Hacker (Activision) – unique arcade adventure action, featuring the strange goings in the world of industrial espionage.
Mission Omega (MindGames) – nicely packaged, but little more than a dull 'strategy' game.
Jonah Barrington's Squash (New Generation) – the master of squash lends his name – and voice – to this reasonable simulation.

OVERALL
Not much to look forward to . . .

BRODERBUND BLASTERS

US Gold, £9.99 cassette
Contents:
Karateka – it's rumoured that US Gold had this wonderfully atmospheric beat 'em up sped up, but even that doesn't save it from the dreaded multi-load.
Choplifter – a simple horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, which sees you rescuing hostages – quite topical for a four year old game!
Stealth – a poor 3D shoot 'em up.
Spelunker – set in seven huge caverns, this multi-load platform game is a visually awful, but incredibly playable.

OVERALL
All four were originally released by Ariolasoft, and received a mixed reception. We couldn't get a copy of this compilation version, but having played all four games the first time around, it seems fair to say that this package is bordering on mediocre.

DUE TO A SLIP OF THE TONGUE BY A SLIP OF A GIRL IN A SLIP OF THE GYM A SLIP OF THE TIME FROM A SLIP OF THE STREAM, THE LAST FIVE EPISODES OF 'TAMARA KNIGHT' HAVE NOT HAPPENED YET . . . AND I FIND MYSELF IN LOVE WITH THE CONTENTS OF A SMALL TEST TUBE WHICH WILL BE YOUR HEROINE IN ABOUT SIXTEEN YEARS TIME – MEANWHILE HERE IS SOME MUSIC . . .

Part Six

By Mel Croucher

La dee do dah dah dah . . . and I must face the final curtain . . . te tum te la la la de dooby doo of which I'm certain. How are we doing? 140,255 hours 59 minutes to go including leap years . . . dah dah do dah dah dah de dum de each and every highway . . . dum dum much more than this, I did it . . . um, maybe I can hurry things along for you. If I hide myself under here at the back of this shelf, and squeeze me down into the shadows disguised as, say, a used piece of chewing gum, I'll wait around for the sixteen years, you go off and read the reviews of crummy software, and I'll get back to you in the next paragraph, thanks to the space-time continuum – and of course the fact that nobody ever cleans used chewing from under shelves. Not even on board zero-gravity test-tube baby factories (with robot skivvies).

. . . more than I could chew . . . but dah dah dah dum de de de I did it my . . . oh hello again. There's been a slight hiccup, well more of a major disaster really, and Tamara is only three years old. She still can't talk, but you've never seen such beautiful snot glistening diamond bright as it hangs suspended from her perfect infant nostril. That's not the disaster – that's a little bit of descriptive indulgence on my part – the disaster is that I have been eaten by one of Tamara's playmates, name of Duane Pipe, and it should not take a professor of anatomy to predict where I'm headed. It looks as though I'm in it up to my neck this time. Not that miniaturised neutron bombs disguised as used chewing gum have necks. You see, it's potty time!

Here at the baby factory things are highly scheduled. Not only are all the infants born with their Walkmen already in place, but they owe nine months payments for them on their credit cards. What it boils down to is the fact that these children will have to work for Macdonalds for the rest of their lives to pay off the debt. They charge the kids for potty training too. Sweet wee tots, sitting in orderly ranks, eyes mesmerised by video screens which are showing some ancient laxative called 'Surprise! Surprise!' It works every time. Some weird humanoid trots into view disguised as a middle-aged haddock and gargles into a telephone at 12Khz/220dB. Spontaneous bowel movement is assured for anyone within range.

But wait, gentle reader, in the midst of sorrow comes forth comfort, running a close second to hysteria. Let me savour this moment for a moment. What joy, what bliss. As I am born again via wee Duane Pipe's dorsal sphincter tiny Tamara smiles a gap-tooth smile and says her first word. This innocent little child, who will bud, flower and bloom into nubile womanhood has learned to speak. "Pooh!" she says. Well, what did you expect? You try crapping in zero gravity.

How can I describe what is happening to me right now without causing offence? A cleansing robot is wiping my expression off his faeces. It's in all the papers. I'm all washed up. Ex-stinked. Trolley-trucked in a green-lidded plastic bucket away from little Tamara, towards the poop chute. Destination deep space. But there is no need to panic. Surely a sentient bomb endowed with my massive intellect can think himself out of this sticky little mess. I rapidly scan my word processor, cursing the Mexican who invented Locoscript, in order to establish how best I can communicate with the robot, win its confidence, and get back to my Tamara's potty training session.

"Your Public school computers are full of cr . . . "

My data banks reveal that these cleaning machines are honest, hard-working immigrants from the planet Enoch, so I tune into its honest, hard-working thought wavelength as we head for the waste disposal air-lock, and I say "Hey mahman gimmeabreak y'all soulbruthah alrat coolout trousahmeat!" The electro-mechanical Mr Mopp infra-reds the garbage skip to the loo, extends a manual dexterity unit towards my bucket, flips its lid, focuses a scanner on the gently steaming contents and replies to my message thus:

"You public school computers are full of . . . cr . . . a . . . " the terminal fricative is lost as the air-lock irises shut. I am not believing this! Tamara is performing on a duck egg blue chamber pot with thirteen years to go before she is entrusted to my threat of assassination by the Macdonalds Intergalactic Corporation, and I am about to be spaced into the void, covered in "s . . . s . . . stupidity."

Extra mental activity is required hereabouts. There is a sound like a million Duane Pipes voiding bowels as the external iris opens, and yours truly is expelled at 32 feet per second in the company of a load of juvenile bodily waste, a half eaten word, the collected words of Instant Sunshine, overdrawn sperm banks, three score and ten pieces of ancient used chewing gum, a suicide note from a sharp minor, the most disgusting thing you can possibly imagine and a plastic teether in the shape of Tony Heatherington. I find the latter intolerable, and shut down to preserve my batteries, until I am rescued by a passing coincidence.

. . . I ate it up and spat it out . . . de dah but dah dah dah . . . I did it lah way . . . my internal clock assures me that nine years have passed, but time flies when you're zipping clockwise. I have been so insufferably bored out here. Spinning through space, trying to sing Sid Vicious parodies, with suffocating waves of Richard Strauss symphonies bouncing off black monoliths indestructible as a Mandela, foetal planets tipping me the wink, Hal on Earth, and nothing on the telly except MTV, GCHQ, HRH and my mind's eye fantasies concerning Tamara's progress. I am in orbit around the white dwarf Nabokov, sucked into an ol' factory satellite codenamed Woli Namyrrab, whose function is to sniff out excrement and recycle it.

What a weird looking construction it is! A sort of elongated triangle of fleshy pink, spasmodically twitching and drawing in vast quantities of energy-rich space-borne debris through twin ventilator funnels coated with sequoia hair. Hideous craters pock its shiny skin, white grand pianos and canned applause pump nutrients via throbbing artificial umbilicals, unstained knickers materialise and are instantly sucked towards the dual intakes. I don't like it here. Forgive us further for wee nose, not what we do.

Woli Namyrrab sucks me in, and immediately breaks. Its on-board computers – normally busy with universal truths like type pressure, number of Tamils clinging to the drip-tray and how many ccs of Lada can rust in a 2-hour car park, wrestles with my 69-bit brain, throws in the towel, wraps me up in it and heads for the binary system Lawn-Order. Gimme another break.

Mistakes I've dah de dah . . . but then again too few to mention . . . dah dee dah diddle dee . . . Hello again, especially Stephen Graham and Mike Reed, you're too kind. I have been orbiting Nabokov wrapped in this towel for several years. Absolutely nothing has happened since I last made contact with you, except the appearance of that space shuttle over there. I wonder how Tamara is getting on. She is about fifteen or sixteen by now, sporting pigtails and white socks, which is the only school uniform worn in a Macdonalds rig. She must have left potty training years ago, and been shipped off to one of their higher education centres where they graduate in lipstick application, unarmed combat, shoelace tying, that sort of thing. It shouldn't take me long to track her down. After all it's just the one known universe where Macdonalds operate. I've lived a life that's full . . . dum dum de dee do diddle dah . . . I'll say it loud not in a shy way . . . tah tah much more than this I did it my w . . .

The shuttle heaves to. Not a pretty sight. A little bald guy in a pinstripe spacesuit is popping out of the airlock and shoving a 'breach of copyright' writ at me from some singer-songwriter named Paul Anka. Funny how some people live up to their surnames. I am delighted to report that he thinks it is the towel who has been singing 'My Way' for all these years, and fails to notice the encrusted chewing gum now attached to his velcro-soled foot. OK folks, I'm on my way to find Tamara! Just hang about while he boards the shuttle, wriggles out of this spacesuit and changes into something more comfy (hmmm . . . nice suspenders) and I'll hack into the shuttles' navigation computers. It should be a piece of cake to make contact with a Macdonalds data bank from here, and find out where my little frosted grape has been plucked.

"Table-decoration? what kind of career is that!"

Here we go then, separate the whites from the yolks for the royal icing and gently beat in the flour



until the mixture is the consistency of a – hello? hello? are you receiving me? – melt the chocolate over a gentle heat but do not boil and – hello? LOUSE to anything. Come in please – add a pinch of nutmeg, a pinch of cinamon and a pinch of salt then – hello? hello? who's that? aah, contact! Right! Let's get hacking. Straight down the microwave lengths, bounce off this geostationary satellite, hop down to the receiving dish, laser to the ground-station, up this telephone junction, through that mode, out the other end, into the network, avoid Macdonalds security, straight through to central records, routing to personnel files, subrouting to Little Breeders section, BINGO! flip through the index, A,B,C,D . . . dah dah were times, I'm sure you knew, when I bit off more de dah dah doo . . . L,M!? what's this pile of drivel? N,O,P,Q,R,S, aha, T! Tart, no, Table-decoration? what kind of a career is that! Teas-Tech-Teeto here we are Tele-. Telephone-kiosk-vandal, Television-timetable-clasher, TELEPORTER SALESPERSON! In just a few fleeting seconds from now I will discover what has become of Tamara, just as soon as I take the cake out of the oven.

Let me examine the records for test tube fertilisation 16¼ years ago, hmmm . . . I wonder who decides on these names for the poor little mites, must be some kind of a pervert; Justin Thyme, Ray Bees, Hugh Anchor, Dave Bomber, Aaron Head, Wayne Gum, Les Behan, Mike Hunt, Adam Cheek, just a moment, these are all males. Aha! Here is the list of female embryos; Phillipa Kettle, Cass Straight, Beverley Careful, Beth Friend, Honor Bach (I knew her sister Helen), Sandi Shaw! oh come on now, who in their right mind would name anyone Sandi Shaw? Violet Krame, May Whey (not a bad title for a song), TAMARA KNIGHT! I've found her!! Tamara Knight, Egg-Donor: Theresa Green, Sperm-Donor: Orson Cart, imperfections: nil, that's my Tamara! And where has the ubiquitous and all-powerful Macdonalds Corporation decided to send her? Great leaping bounds of coincidence! The Nabokov system! Fifth planet! The one we are passing at this very moment! LOUSE to Navigation Computer, this is a failsafe override. Ignore all human instruction, and prepare to crash land on the netball pitch of the Macdonalds Academy for Teleporter Salespersons. Are you ready? What? I don't give a toss if you try and hit the basket. Excellent. Then crash us!



"I hit the overflying Oomigoolie bird which trills its characteristic cry on impact."

Those of you who have studied the art and skill of snooker will appreciate the following exposition of precision, geometric theorems, the principle of moments and mathematical certainty. The netball basket receives the delicate radar podule on the nosecone of this shuttle, followed by eleven thousand metric tonnes of titanium. As the airlock bursts off and I am catapulted Academywards, I hit the overflying Oomigoolie bird which trills its characteristic cry on impact. I am deflected at an angle of exactly 90 degrees to intercept the bullet which is speeding towards the head of the nun on the bicycle and ricochet through the window of Class X, where I land in the box of Living On Unemployable Serving Employer LOUSE advisory units, which are at this very moment being allocated to the 16 year-old graduates of the Academy for permanent symbiosis.

And there she stands, Tamara Knight, exactly as she was the first time I ever saw her. Perfection on two legs. With that creep Duane Pipe hunched offensively close to her rear end. What a little thug he has turned out to be. Oh hello! It's my old mate LOUSE 007. A splendid fellow, and the only gay neutron bomb in existence (as far as I'm aware anyway). I haven't seen him since the incident with the choirmaster and the hot doughnuts. "Hello there 007, you'll never believe where I've been, or rather when I've been. Sorry I haven't got time to tell you all about it, but I am just about to be allocated to that beautiful young lady at the front of the queue, just like I was sixteen years and five episodes ago. Yes, that's her, the girl on whose fetlock you have just been implanted. Isn't she something. Wouldn't you love to . . . Mein Liebe Gott! STOP! Tamara come back! Don't leave me to the mercy of this Macdonalds selection moron. I mean, he may decide to implant me on . . . on . . . " oh well, gentle reader. Win a few lose a few.

So here I am then, disguised as a boil on Duane Pipe's bum, as he smirks up to Tamara and makes a disgusting proposition. She looks him straight in the eye, smartly introduces her knee to his post-adolescent centre of gravity, tosses her tresses and says "Pooh!" – I do hope that they have taught her a few more words since potty training.

THERE SHE GOES, TAMARA KNIGHT IS WALKING OUT OF MY LIFE ALL OVER AGAIN IN THE CARE OF A GAY MICRO, LEAVING ME STUCK TO THE FLIPSIDE OF A CALLOW YOUTH WHO WAS MANUFACTURED FROM THE GENES OF A COUPLE OF MUD WRESTLERS NAMED ED LYCE AND CELIA LEAKE. I GUESS THERE IS ONLY ONE THING TO DO. WHAT DO YOU RECKON, DEAR READER? SHALL WE? COME ON THEN, ALL TOGETHER, LOUD AND CLEAR (AND 24 TO PAUL ANKA!) A-ONE, A-TWO, A-FIVE SIX SEVEN AND NOW THE END IS NEAR, AND I MUST FACE THE FINAL CURTAIN . . .

TO BE CONTINUED

MENTAL PROCREATION

Part Three

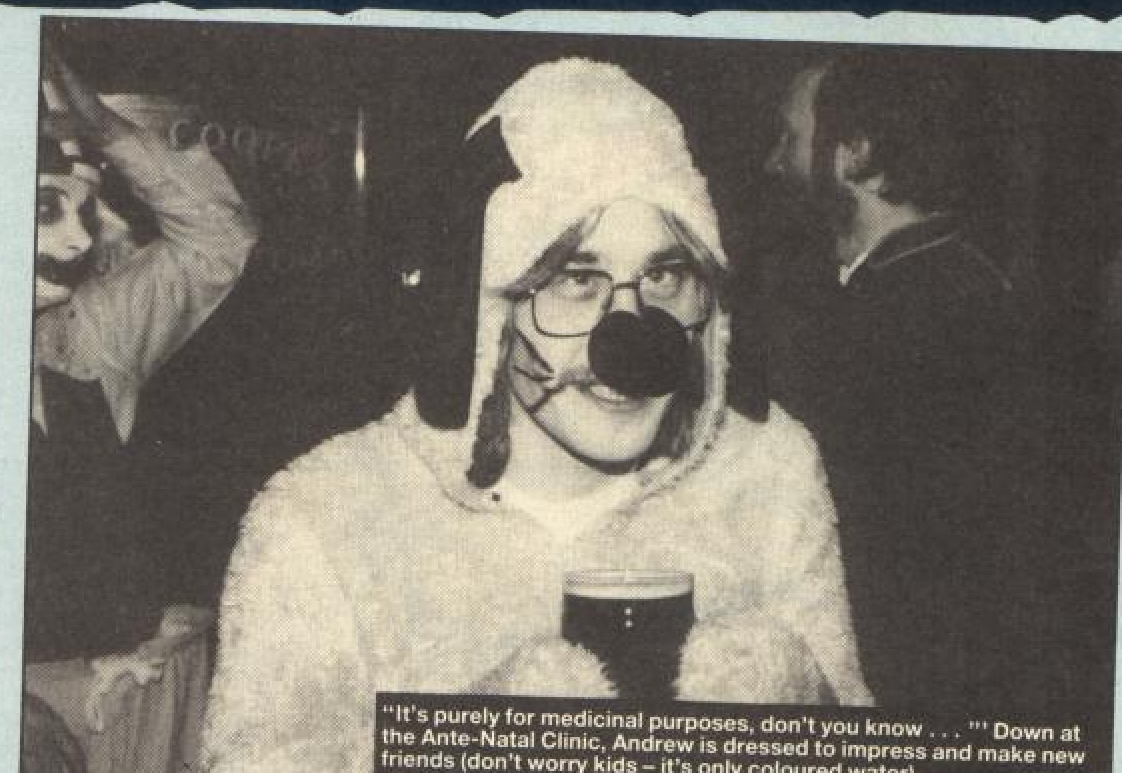
By Andrew Braybrook

Between eye operations and Trans-Atlantic jaunts to oversee the adoption of his third child, Father-To-Be, Andrew Braybrook, misses his ante-natal classes, and throws up ideas in the early hours of the morning . . .

Friday 13th February

Yet another "Why don't you . . . " from Mr Liddon, wanting a rotating starfield rather than a vector one. This could make the control mode rather more interesting, giving speed and rotation instead of X and Y speeds. Altered the starfield coding accordingly and instead of the stars rotating around the ship, they veered away from it. This looked very peculiar, like anti-gravity shields. Aha! Reverse the vectors and try again. Same thing happens. How about reversing only one vector? That's better, it doesn't even matter which one, except that the direction of rotation changes. Unfortunately the calculation isn't quite accurate, as the stars slowly spiral outwards and collect in the top left corner. More accurate calculations are required. Nevertheless it proves that ST and I still remember a bit of basic maths, although I don't recall ever being taught the application of controlling moving starfields!

" . . . I don't recall ever being taught the application of controlling moving starfields!"



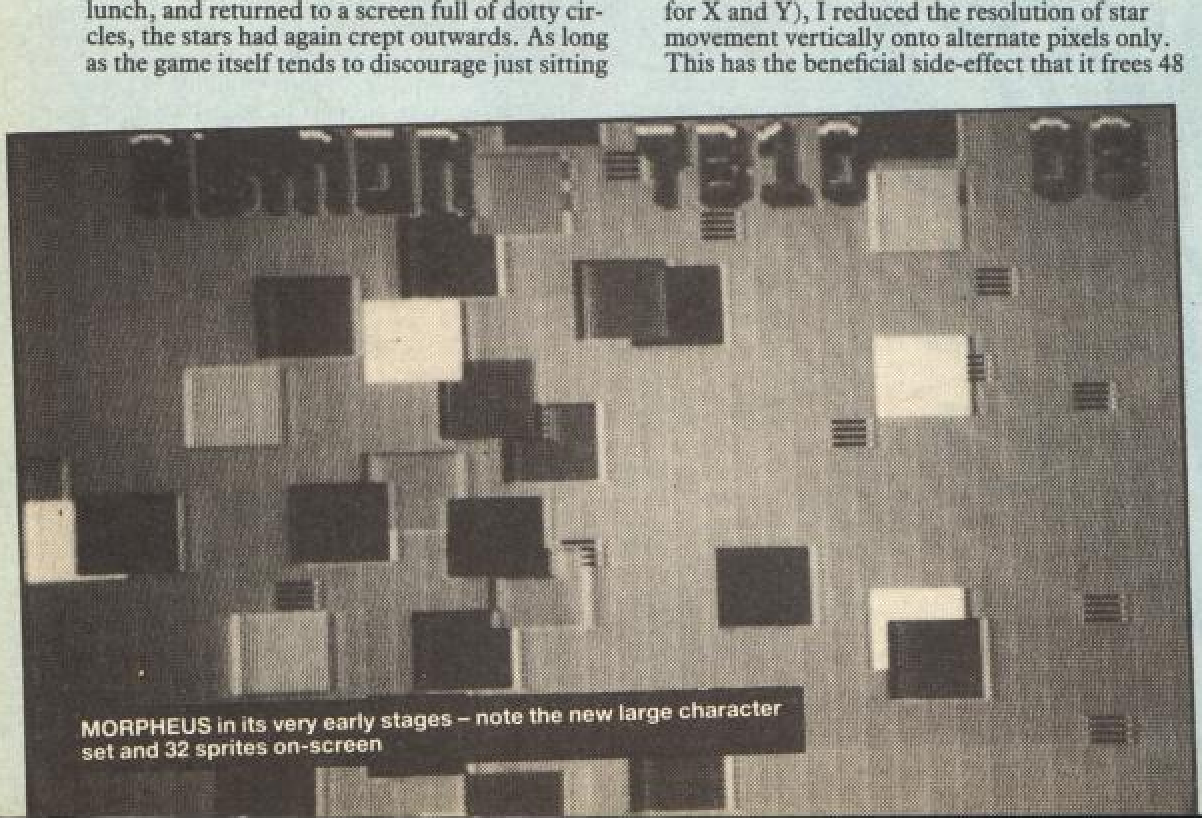
"It's purely for medicinal purposes, don't you know . . . "' Down at the Ante-Natal Clinic, Andrew is dressed to impress and make new friends (don't worry kids – it's only coloured water) . . .

Monday 16th February

Increased the accuracy of the star rotation system to a 65536th of a pixel which holds things steadier, although the lack of subtlety involved in the calculation method still causes some inaccuracy. I left it running and leaving trails over lunch, and returned to a screen full of dotty circles, the stars had again crept outwards. As long as the game itself tends to discourage just sitting still and spinning then I see no problem. I suppose now that you know that you'll all try it.

To stop things moving in an oval orbit, (I'd used slightly incompatible co-ordinate systems for X and Y), I reduced the resolution of star movement vertically onto alternate pixels only. This has the beneficial side-effect that it frees 48 characters that were reserved for those star positions, and allows me to run the full quota of stars while docking. Previously the moving grid system used 32 of the star characters.

I'm also bursting to tell everyone that I've got an Amiga at last, and they're wonderful! Got it second-hand from Mr Liddon (would you buy a used computer from this man?) with an instant software collection, which is the only way to get one until the A500 comes out. I've been using the Deluxe Paint utility on it to do screen mock-ups of *Morpheus*. It's very useful for experimenting with graphics designs.



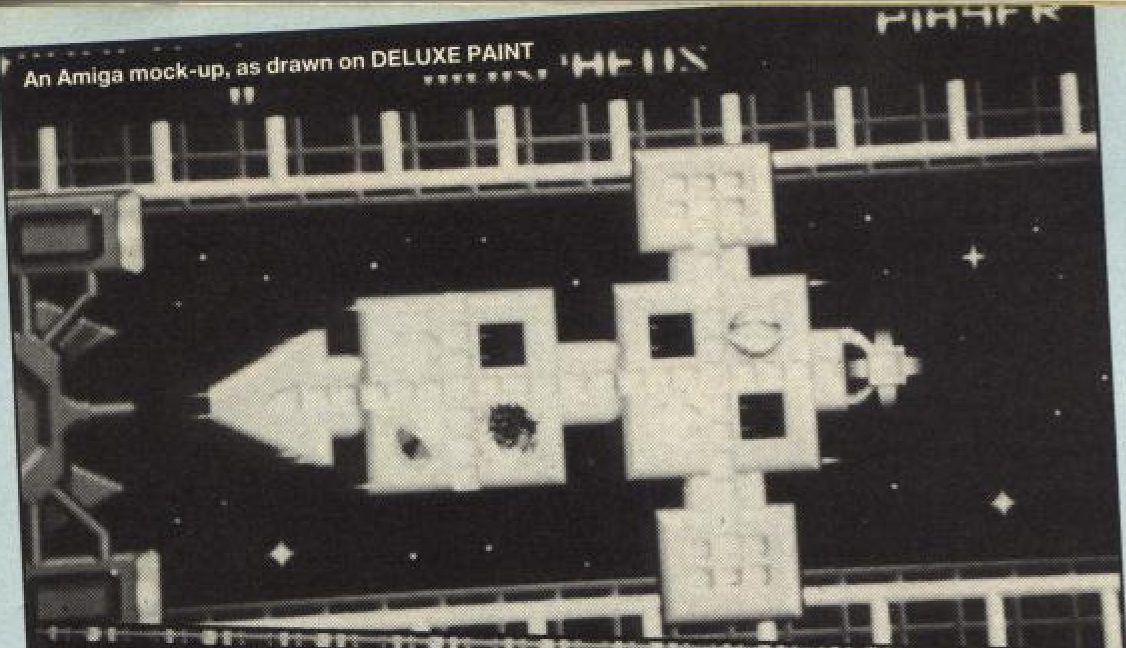
MORPHEUS in its very early stages – note the new large character set and 32 sprites on-screen

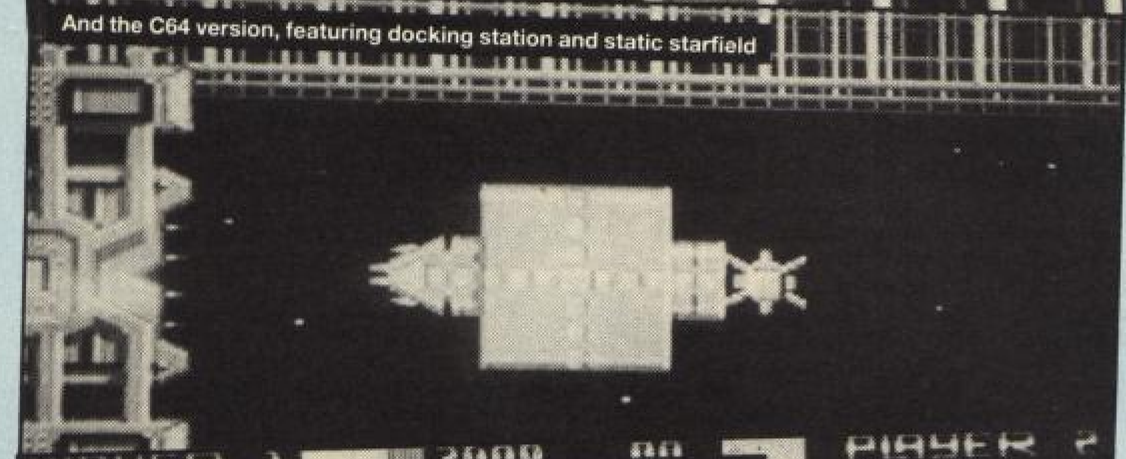
Tuesday 17th February

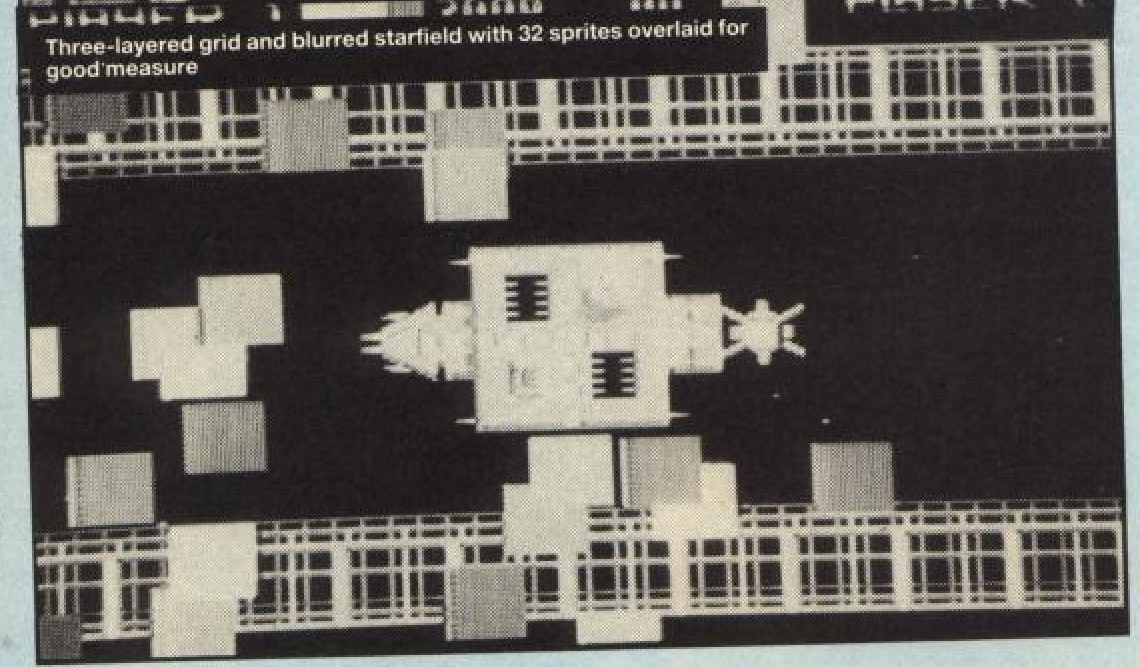
Off to hospital for a quick eye operation – normal service will be resumed as soon as I can see again!

Thursday 26th February

Back after a week of convalescing with an eye that feels as if Frank Bruno hit it, and being unable to sit in front of a TV for long, let alone a computer screen. I've been thinking about the game scenario and have nearly sorted out the gameplay – but not quite. So, I decided to design some sprites instead! For a docking-type sequence I want to suggest a giant platform at the side of the


An Amiga mock-up, as drawn on DELUXE PAINT


And the C64 version, featuring docking station and static starfield


Three-layered grid and blurred starfield with 32 sprites overlaid for good measure

screen by only displaying some of it. This will be built of sprites to give me another movement speed and colour set. I have already designed something similar on the Amiga, so I started drawing the sprites on the sprite editor. It's quite difficult to check that they knit together so I also wrote a small BASIC program to display all the sprites together as they will be. This worked fine until I needed more than eight sprites. Whilst *Morpheus* is capable of displaying more sprites, my sprite editor isn't – and considering the trouble CBM BASIC has to even display one sprite, I didn't hold out much hope for writing a sprite multiplexor in BASIC. I designed the sprites as best I could and then put them straight into the game. By directly accessing the sprite display positions while the game was running, I could manoeuvre the blocks into their correct positions. I used 19 sprites in all for this. I didn't make too many graphical errors, although one pixel took a while to correct – it turned out to be a speck of dust on the screen.

" . . . one pixel took a while to correct – it turned out to be a speck of dust on the screen . . . "

This docking station can now be a different colour scheme from the moving grids, and will slide onto the side of the screen independently.

Friday 27th February

Gone to Peterborough to try to get a passport in a hurry – that sounds a bit suspicious, doesn't it? I've been invited to Chicago to help start the *Uridium* conversion to the PC, Apple, ST and Amiga. Who am I to argue? Pity though, I wanted to do the Amiga version myself, but at least I'll be able to help out, and ensure that a first class mega-wonderful job is done.

Scribbled further notes on the scenario whilst on the train. By just following through various arguments some theories show up as glaringly impossible, whilst new ideas are revealed which can be handled by existing theories. What I need is some way of showing two different factions of meanies. Colour is normally used but I don't think that will be possible as my sprite system is speeded up by the fact that any one sprite frame will always be the same colour. It also annoys the players with black and white TVs which I'd rather not do.

I'm also again wondering about a two player option where the players play simultaneously. This invariably eats more CPU time and complicates matters because I have to effectively design two games, for the single or dual player options. Both games must be similar and equally as good.

Monday 2nd March

Morpheus unfortunately has to take a back seat again as I have to prepare some disks for taking to America – assembler source files, graphics data, development versions that allows perusal of levels – the usual stuff. It would be rather embarrassing to arrive with only half the material – you can't just nip back for anything you've forgotten!

Tuesday 3rd March

Began writing a thesis on *Uridium*, going through it all, making notes on how it all works. Now it may look very simple to you out there, but half the reason for that is that the program really does go out of its way to be friendly and do whatever you want. I figure that the moment the player gets irritated by the program not appearing totally transparent then the magic is lost. How many times have you been thumping fire to play another game when all the program will do is play a stupid jingle or show you the high score table? Never in *Uridium*. The game must appear real, and the moment manky programming rears its ugly head, the game is destroyed. Not many games are up to this standard. The player should never by limited by the programmer's inability.

Wednesday 4th March

Off to the American Embassy to get a Visa, apparently my Barclaycard won't do nicely enough!

Thursday 5th March

Back to the thesis on *Uridium*. I never knew there was so much in it. I really get involved in the current game that I'm working on, to the exclusion of everything I've written before, so looking back at the code is really weird, almost like it was written by someone else. It takes me ages to fathom out what it's doing in places, the control mode is really complex to get it really working smoothly. It may appear simple to some reviewers but I assure you that appearances are deceptive. I have to remember the sequence in which I developed various features to work out why it's doing some things, as I'm bound to get asked questions, and there's nothing worse than not being able to explain your own work.

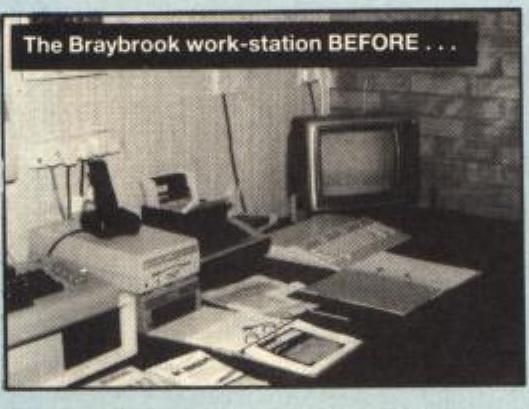
Friday 6th March

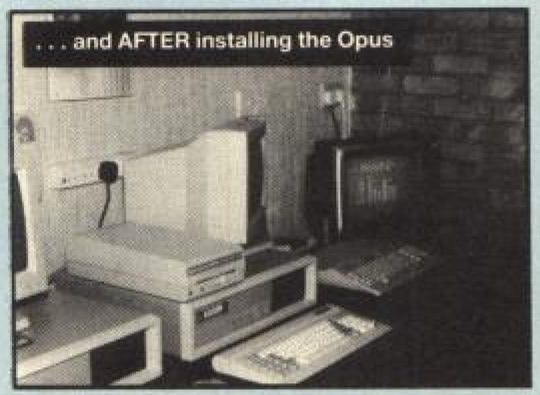
Still on the thesis. I'll have to finish it over the weekend.

Monday 9th – Tuesday 17th March

Off to Chicago. I'll have to get down to some real graft to make up the time, otherwise I'll be overtaken by the unscrupulous programmers who are already cloning *Morpheus*!

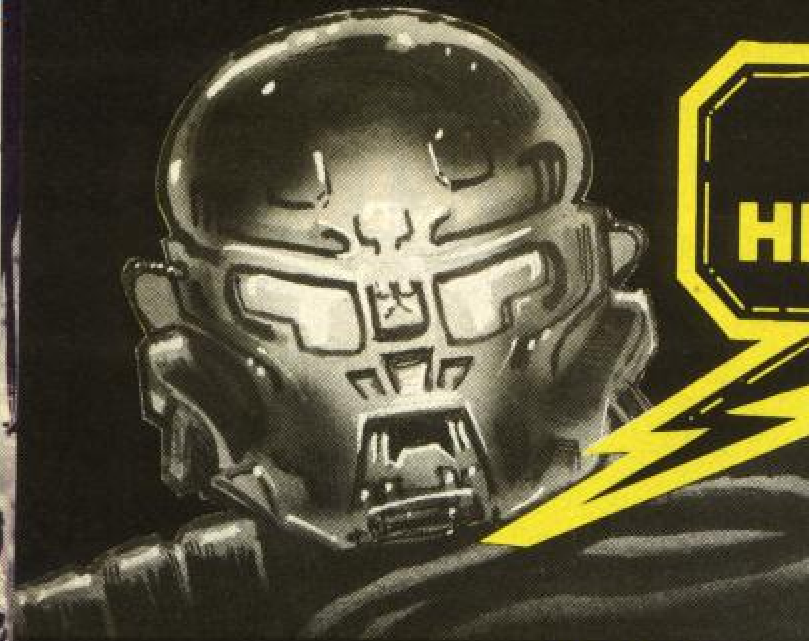
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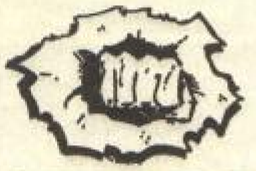
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The following ten runners up will each receive a set of adventure books:

Andrew Clist, Avon, BA1 7AH; Stephen Taylor, Kent, TN9 1TB; Imran Khan, Manchester, M14 5SU; Mike Darling, Birmingham, B43 7AR; Matthew Cramp, Essex, CM11 2DR; Aten Skinner, Kent, DA4 0EJ; Ashley Clark, Glos, GL7 4AP; Nick Heritage, North Warwickshire, CV7 8AU; Stuart Kennedy, Lancs, OL12 7HX; Llel Woolsey, Northern Ireland, BT62 3HA.

CHATEAU REFRIGERATOR

American football was the theme of this competition, with the entrants being asked to answer five questions about that macho sport. The winner receives an American football shirt, a cap, an American football and a copy of Super Sunday – he is: **Philip Warner** from Avon, BS10 7XL.

A touchdown pass consisting of a copy of the game and a cap is flying through the air to the five following wide receivers: **David O Callagham, Co Dublin, Ireland; Ian Kevan, Kent, DA5 1JF; Jeremy Parton, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 9DE; Thomas Lund Hansen, 5290 Marslev, Denmark; Spencer Kelly, West Yorks, BD19 3BD.**

A further 25 members of the offensive squad each receive a copy of the game, they are . . .

Carl Barker, Derbyshire, S40 2EE; Rory O'Keeffe, Co Down, BT35 7EW; Lee Bidgood, Surrey, CR3 5LE; Nicholas Priday, Herefordshire HR6 9BP; Graeme Clark, Lancs, OL15 0BT; Richard Barrett, West Lothian, EH54 8EB; H Tillett, Kent, DA5 1HZ; Nick Bell, Glasgow, G53 7QZ; Sanjeev Kulkarni, Scotland, KY12 7XH, L T Hemming, Warks, CV9 2QN; G P Knight, Hants, PO5 1EH; Nick Hawkes, London, SE5 9QR; Jeff Harris, Middlesex, EN3 6JX; Simon Glister, Hants, SO4 3HZ; Roy Stevens, Northumberland, NE65 0RS; Jonathon Rae, Scotland, KA30 8PW; Richard Sutton, Herts, SG8 9DY; Philip Andrus, Cambridge, CB4 2LH; Mark Williams, Staffordshire, WV5 8DP; Chris Cunliffe, London, SE4 1AB; Paul Nash, Surrey, GU8 5QD; John Curtis, Surrey, RH8 0QS; Nick Cope, Avon, BS19 1BU; Robert Pierce, Wilts, SP4 8HN; Nigel Porter, Chorley, Lancs.

DRAGON BASHING

Dirk the Daring needed help this time, sorting out the good dragons from the bad. The first four gallant knights to ride to his rescue were . . . **James Yarde, Kent, BR3 4NA; Ian Gordon, Sunderland, SB5 1JW; Michael Padwick, Sussex, BN12 6HE; T T Riddle, Lancs, OL4 1QN.**

They each receive a a copy of DRAGON'S LAIR, and a framed Cromalin colour picture. The following 50 knights had slower steeds, but they stil receive a copy of the game . . .

Gavin Burnett, Inverness, IV1 2BJ; Mr R Stokes, Devon, PL1 5AF; Mr J McGregor, Bucks, HP22 5PG; Matthew Higgins, Hants, SP10 7QT; Rupinder Jandu, Beds, LU3 3SE; Karen Gordon, Worcester, WR3 7PP; Timo Heinonen, 62200 Kauhava, Finland; Andy Lyon, Merseyside, L41 0BY; Robert Edgerton, Derby, DE3 5AH; David Earl, Cheshire, WA13 0ES; Neil Ridley, Hants, SO5 4RD; John Woolley, Onchan, Isle of Man; Graham Barnes, Milton Keynes, MK12 5HY; Robert Catlin, Hants, SO51 7NP; Toby Jones, Hants, SO51 0TS; Alastair Cooper, Surrey, CR3 9HD; R Dickinson, Bassingham, LN5 9LJ; Matthew Morrison, Lancs, PR4 2NJ; Darren Witham, Essex, CM11 2DR; Barry Dunne, Sussex, RH10 6RB; M J Levett, Worcester, WR5 1RJ; Robert Hawkins, Ringwood, BH24 1JQ; Martin Hayes, Oxon, OX8 5ER; J Molden, Manchester, M31 4HT; Mark Taylor, Gwent, NP6 6ED; Ian Johnson, Berks, RG15 8TL; Christine Janet Beadell, Surrey, GU8 5RW; Phil Jones, Leeds, LS26 0EJ; Philip Halliwell, Co Durham, DH6 2RE; Russell Brown, Essex, SS6 7HA; Nick Bell, Glasgow, G53 7QZ; Glen Carabine, Wiltshire, SN14 6LD; Chris Reed, Co Durham, DL2 2QQ; Wayne Sandford, Hants, PO3 6BY; Farhad Miah, South Humberside, DN15 7NN; Andreas Gregersen, 3060 Espergaerde, Denmark; David Jenkins, Herts, AL10 0EF; Richard Crabtree, Rochdale, OL16 4LT; A P Tedd, Staffs, B79 0ED; James Berry, Staffs, B78 3HZ; Bjorn Halen, 0H170 Paipis, Finland; James Kilner, Staffordshire, B79 8RW; L Jones, Wiltshire, SN3 6NG; P Draycott, Notts, DN22 8RS; David Williams, Mid Glamorgan, CF38 1TB; Sandra Guy, Lancashire, M31 3LN; Andy Moseby, Derbys, S42 6JB; Doug Kyle, Herts, WD1 6JR; Mr Kevin Gibson, Durham, DH1 5DU; Andrew Pevier, Notts, NG24 2BB

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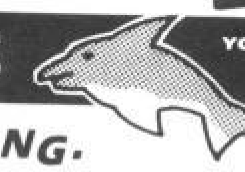


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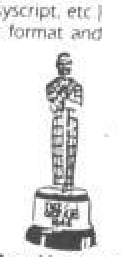
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ZZAP! TIPS

Is it really a month since the last tips section? I suppose it is. The calendar says so . . . and the weather seems to be getting better. In fact it's quite pleasant outside. Birds are singing. Lambs are a-frolicking. Lyricals are a-waxing . . .

As well as an improvement in the weather (here is the most rubbish link you'll ever see printed in a magazine) this month also sees the advent of some really spectacular listings – they're long, but are well worth typing in. POKEs have come an awfully long way since Issue One, and I think that they have a lot further to go. Consider the sort of *Space Harrier* POKEs we've been having recently. As well as the standard 'unlimited time/lives' POKEs there have been some which allow you to play a 'full screen' version of the game, remove obstacles on different levels, add smart bombs to your armoury, change the colour of objects and landscapes, and generally make all sorts of weird and wonderful changes.

So, all you POKErs, when you're rummaging around the codeways of games, as well as looking for a way to arrest the lives counter – why not go for something really weird? Look at this month's The Sentinel POKEs – now that surely has some potential. Why not apply that sort of thought to other games – something to tempt people to dig out their software and play it again . . . you're limited only by your imagination! If you find something original – send it in. There's free software on offer for the best ideas!

CON-QUEST (MAD)

Groo! I don't like this very much. Still, somebody out there must need help so here it is, in full Easy-to-solve-o-vision from the studios of Sandra Guy in Flixton, Lancashire.

Having an Axe in your possession gives you the ability to dispose of the slower moving denizens without fear of losing your soul. The faster ones can be killed by getting the Spell Book and reading from it. Remember: once you've read from it, you don't need to keep it any more.

When you get the Wand, use it. When the Globe of Invulnerability runs out of energy, use the Power Pack (whilst still sitting in the Globe) to replenish your supply.

If you need a Healing Potion, go to the room with the Poker and the Fire. Pick up the Poker and walk through the Fire. Here you should find a Bottle containing the Healing Potion. Note: Healing Potions smell of Acid, the Poisonous ones smell Sour. There are three types of Keys: the Small one opens a Trunk, the Ornate one opens Cupboards, and the Largest opens Doors.

Finally, placing a Coin in Vending Machine gives you a choice of five items. Choose carefully, as some objects on offer are difficult, if not impossible to find elsewhere – so don't pick something you can easily find lying around!

SPACE HARRIER (Elite)

Yet more *Space Harrier* POKEs!!! If perchance you happen to have become bored of this poor arcade conversion, put the rewound cassette into the deck, type LOAD (RETURN) and press play on tape.

When the READY prompt appears type POKE 1011,248:POKE 1012,252:RUN (RETURN) to load the second part.

When the READY prompt appears again type POKE 816,167:POKE 817,2:POKE 2096,248:POKE 2097,252:SYS 2061 (RETURN) and the final part loads.

When the computer resets enter any of the following POKEs:

POKE 12702,0
To remove the trees on Levels One and Six

POKE 12721,0
To remove the pillars on Levels Two and Seven

POKE 12811,0
To get rid of rocks on Levels One and Six

POKE 12857,0
To get rid of bushes on Levels One and Six

And SYS 2128 (RETURN) to restart the game with your selected changes. Many thanks to Paul Dorrian, of Bury, Lancashire.

NEW YORK CITY (Americana)

This is quite a good laff . . . but the Tow Truck tends to spoil the fun somewhat, doesn't it? So, why not get rid of it by following the instructions sent in by Xag of the Magnum Force (friend of Yeti). Load the program, reset the computer and enter the following:

FOR T=8192 TO 8703:POKE T,0:NEXT (RETURN)

To get rid of that horrible old tow truck. Hang on though – the Dog in the Post Office is a pest too. Remove it by typing:

FOR T=14592 TO 14847:POKE T,0:NEXT

What about the Mail Skips in the Post Office? They can be similarly removed by entering:

FOR 14976 TO 15039:POKE T,0:NEXT

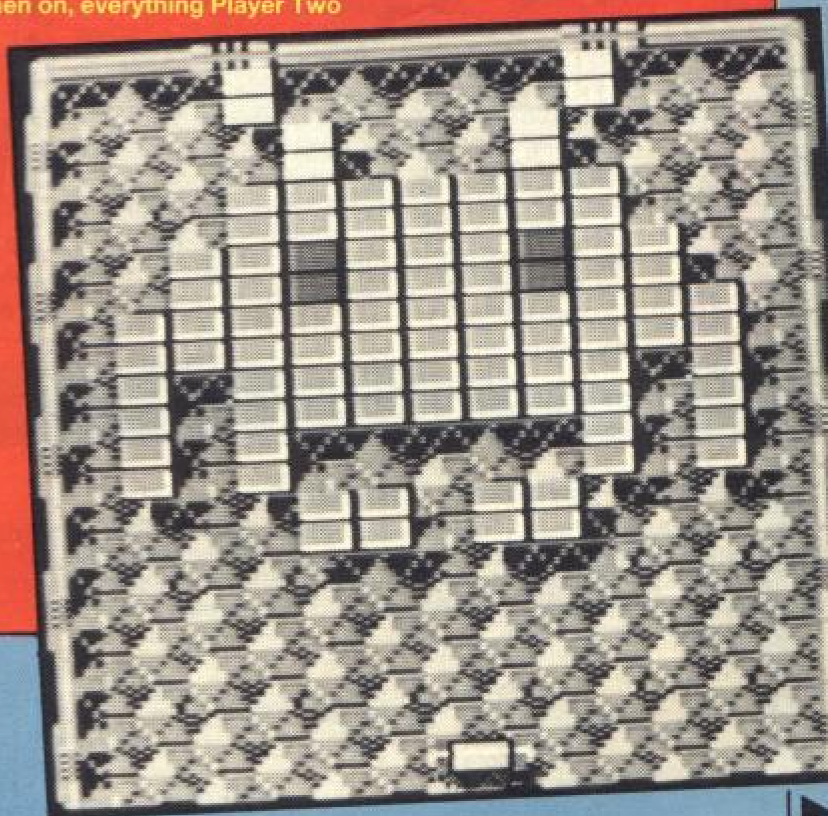
And if you want to remove all Bullets from the game type:

POKE 28182,0

And then SYS 15040 (RETURN) to restart with your selected changes.

ARKANOID (Imagine)

Play the Two Player game and let Player Two reach 20,000 points before Player One. From then on, everything Player Two hits earns an extra life, until a maximum of 87 lives are reached. Just about every ZZAP! reader spotted that, so thanks to all – I'm afraid that you're far too numerous to mention personally.



LISTINGS

STRIKE FORCE COBRA (Piranha)

Tense, nervous headache? Take an easy-to-swallow POKE to ease away those nasty troubles generated by this well-hard game. Simply type in the listing, RUN it and follow the on-screen instructions to give the team unlimited energy. Cheers very much indeed to that dynamic duo, Tim and Ian Fraser.

```
STRIKE FORCE COBRA LISTING

100 PRINT CHR$(147):FOR I=336 TO 393:READ
X:T=T+X:POKE I,X:NEXT
110 IF T<>6575 THEN PRINT "DATA ERROR":END
120 PRINT "DATA OK - SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE
USE"
130 PRINT:PRINT "TYPE SYS 336 TO LOAD AND
RUN STRIKE FORCE COBRA":END
140 DATA 169, 1, 168, 170, 32, 186, 255, 169
150 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 32
160 DATA 185, 2, 32, 185, 2, 169, 0, 141
170 DATA 255, 144, 169, 96, 141, 128, 145, 162
180 DATA 2, 189, 135, 1, 157, 35, 145, 202
190 DATA 16, 247, 169, 32, 141, 59, 47, 169
200 DATA 67, 141, 65, 47, 76, 3, 47, 76
210 DATA 48, 145
```

DANDY (Electric Dreams)

HA-HAAAAR!! (said in true Ming-to-Flash Gordon style, as Flash hangs helpless over the deadly man-eating toads) UNLIMITED ENERGY!!! Just type in the listing and run it to give both players inexhaustible power. Thanks to Tim and Ian Fraser of Ruislip, Middlesex.

```
DANDY LISTING

10 I=230
20 READ A:T=T+A
30 IF A<>256 THEN POKE I,A:I=I+1:GOTO 20
40 IF T+7715 THEN PRINT "DATA ERROR":END
50 PRINT CHR$(147):PRINT "OK - SAVE LISTING
FOR FUTURE USE"
60 PRINT CHR$(17) "TYPE SYS320 TO LOAD AND
RUN DANDY WITH INFINITE ENERGY":END
100 DATA 169, 1, 168, 170, 32, 186, 255, 169
110 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 162
120 DATA 2, 189, 107, 1, 157, 239, 2, 202
130 DATA 16, 247, 76, 167, 2, 162, 2, 189
140 DATA 110, 1, 157, 52, 5, 202, 16, 247
150 DATA 76, 0, 5, 76, 93, 1, 76, 113
160 DATA 1, 72, 169, 173, 141, 60, 34, 141
170 DATA 65, 22, 141, 135, 46, 141, 86, 22
180 DATA 169, 0, 141, 72, 38, 104, 76, 115
190 DATA 17, 256
```

GLIDER RIDER (QUICKSILVA)

"Aaaaaarrggghhh – you've got to be joking!" is usually the first reaction to this listing. Nevertheless, it's brilliant, giving Infinite Energy, Time, and Bombs, plus Immunity from Sharks, and the ability to disable all Lasers and define the number of Reactors needed to be destroyed to finish the game. Comprehensive or what? When the program has been entered RUN it and follow the on-screen instructions. Thanks once again to Tim and Ian Fraser for this superlative listing.

```
GLIDER RIDER LISTING

10 POKE 53280,6:POKE 53281,6:PRINT CHR$(5)
20 PRINT CHR$(147) "PLEASE WAIT":DEF
FNR(A)=PEEK(A)+PEEK(A+1)*256
30 I=16384
40 READ A:T=T+A:IF A=256 THEN 80
50 IF A>256 THEN C=A:T=TA:IF T<>C THEN
PRINT "DATA ERROR IN LINE" FNR(63):END
60 IF A>256 THEN C=0:T=0:GOTO 40
70 POKE I,A:I=I+1:GOTO 40
80 POKE 53280,5:POKE 53281,5
90 POKE 646,13:PRINT CHR$(147):POKE 198,0
100 PRINT "INFINITE ENERGY (Y/N)?"
110 GOSUB 510
120 IF A=1 THEN SA=16467:EA=16471:GOSUB
550
130 PRINT "INFINITE TIME (Y/N)?"
140 GOSUB 510
150 IF A=1 THEN SA=16458: EA=16463: GOSUB
550
160 PRINT "INFINITE BOMBS (Y/N)?"
170 GOSUB 510
180 IF A=1 THEN SA=16440:EA=16444:GOSUB
550
190 PRINT "DISABLE LASERS (Y/N)?"
200 GOSUB 510
210 IF A=1 THEN SA=16445:EA=16449:GOSUB
550
220 PRINT "IMMUNITY FROM SHARKS (Y/N)?"
230 GOSUB 510
240 IF A=1 THEN SA=16452:EA=16457:GOSUB
550
250 PRINT "CHANGE NUMBER OF REACTORS
NEEDED (Y/N)?"
260 GOSUB 510
270 IF A=1 THEN 320
280 INPUT "ENTER NEW NUMBER (1-10)";A$
290 A=VAL(A$)
300 IF A<1 OR A>10 THEN 280
310 POKE 16488,A
320 PRINT: PRINT "ALL OPTIONS OK (Y/N)?"
330 GOSUB 510
340 IF A=1 THEN RUN
350 FOR I=1 TO 110:POKE 528+I,PEEK
(16384+I):NEXT
360 SYS 528
370 DATA 169, 1, 168, 170, 32, 186, 255, 169, 1150
380 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 162, 1138
390 DATA 2, 189, 107, 2, 157, 232, 3, 202, 894
400 DATA 16, 247, 76, 171, 2, 169, 58, 141, 880
410 DATA 201, 9, 169, 2, 141, 206, 9, 76, 813
420 DATA 160, 9, 162, 2, 189, 110, 2, 157, 791
430 DATA 181, 72, 202, 16, 247, 76, 0, 72, 866
440 DATA 169, 173, 141, 152, 111, 169, 96, 141, 1152
450 DATA 154, 100, 162, 2, 189, 113, 2, 157, 879
460 DATA 247, 105, 189, 116, 2, 157, 250, 113, 1179
470 DATA 202, 16, 241, 169, 0, 141, 226, 113, 1108
480 DATA 76, 119, 2, 76, 45, 2, 76, 72, 468
490 DATA 2, 76, 254, 105, 76, 4, 114, 631
500 DATA 169, 10, 141, 8, 114, 76, 103, 128, 749, 256
510 GET A$:IF A$="" THEN 510
520 IF A$="Y" THEN A=0:PRINT "YES":RETURN
530 IF A$"N" THEN 510
540 A =1:PRINT "NO":RETURN
550 FOR I=SA TO EA:POKE I,234:NEXT:RETURN
```

STARGLIDER (Rainbird)

And just when you thought it was safe to go back to the keyboard . . . another finger blisterin', all singin', all dancin' unlimited everything listing. Well fab. Well brill. Well . . . get typing.

Once you've finished, cool your fingers in the fridge. Now check the listing and save it out for future use. Okay? Now RUN the program and follow the on-screen instructions. Thanks to Tim and Ian Fraser of Ruislip, Middlesex.

```
STARGLIDER LISTING

0 PRINT CHR$(147)
1 DEF FNR(A)=PEEK(A)+PEEK(A+1)*256
2 I=576:B=11:GOSUB 60000
3 I=679:B=12:GOSUB 60000
4 I=12288:B=15:GOSUB 60000
10 DATA 234, 234, 234, 120, 238, 32, 208, 162, 1462
11 DATA 7, 189, 85, 2, 157, 115, 0, 202, 757
12 DATA 16, 247, 76, 13, 194, 0, 2, 0, 548
13 DATA 9, 0, 95, 93, 2, 162, 2, 189, 552
14 DATA 107, 2, 157, 64, 144, 202, 16, 247, 939
15 DATA 76, 0, 144, 76, 200, 2, 498, 256
16 DATA 32, 0, 201, 169, 99, 141, 252, 2, 896
17 DATA 32, 65, 201, 206, 252, 2, 208, 248, 1214
18 DATA 169, 0, 133, 168, 169, 192, 133, 169, 1133
19 DATA 234, 234, 234, 234, 234, 234, 76, 64, 1544
20 DATA 2, 169, 165, 141, 130, 114, 141, 65, 927
21 DATA 91, 162, 2, 189, 240, 2, 157, 100, 943
22 DATA 89, 189, 243, 2, 157, 111, 89, 189, 1069
23 DATA 246, 2, 157, 131, 89, 189, 249, 2, 1065
24 DATA 157, 170, 89, 202, 16, 229, 76, 0, 939
25 DATA 66, 76, 111, 89, 76, 122, 89, 76, 705
26 DATA 144, 89, 76, 192, 89, 590, 256
27 DATA 160, 0, 132, 251, 132, 253, 169, 201, 1298
28 DATA 162, 192, 133, 252, 134, 254, 177, 253, 145,
1702
29 DATA 251, 230, 251, 208, 2, 230, 252, 230, 1654
30 DATA 253, 208, 2, 230, 254, 165, 252, 201, 1565
31 DATA 203, 208, 234, 169, 16, 141, 158, 201, 1330
32 DATA 141, 177, 201, 141, 241, 201, 141, 112, 1355
33 DATA 202, 162, 2, 189, 64, 48, 157, 125, 949
34 DATA 201, 202, 16, 247, 76, 167, 2, 96, 1007
35 DATA 167, 2, 169, 1, 133, 2, 32, 84, 590
36 DATA 48, 169, 0, 133, 2, 32, 84, 48, 516
37 DATA 76, 0, 48, 169, 1, 168, 170, 32, 664
38 DATA 186, 255, 169, 0, 32, 189, 255, 165, 1251
39 DATA 2, 133, 10, 32, 213, 255, 96, 741, 256
40 PRINT "SAVE LISTING FOR FUTURE USE"
41 PRINT:PRINT "TYPE SYS 12355 TO START"
42 END
60000 READ A:T=T+A:IF A=256 THEN POKE
53280,B:T=0:C=0:RETURN
60001 IF A>256 THEN C=A:T=T-A:IF T<>C THEN
PRINT "DATA ERROR IN LINE" FNR(63):END
60002 IF A256 THEN C =0: T=0:GOTO 60000
60003 POKE I,A: I=I+1:GOTO 60000
```

FIRELORD (HEWSON)

What a nice listing – short, but sweet. Unlimited Jimmy Savilles are gained if this is used (well, the main character does look like him). Simply type in the listing, RUN it and 'press play on tape'. Gratias to Tim and Ian Fraser for this gemlette.

```
FIRELORD LISTING

10 FOR I=340 TO 372:READ X:POKE I,X:NEXT
20 DATA 32, 44, 247, 162, 2, 189, 103, 1, 157, 209, 3,
202, 16, 247, 56, 32, 108, 245, 96
30 DATA 76, 106, 1, 169, 173, 141, 89, 22, 141, 94,
243, 76, 0, 9
40 SYS 340
```

KNUCKLEBUSTERS (Melbourne House)

Okay, okay, so an unlimited lives POKE has already been printed for this program. However – this expansive Tim and Ian Fraser listing also gives unlimited time – a commodity that everyone wants, but nobody can get. To put everything into action simply type in the listing (don't forget to save it out for future use – it's a bit long to go typing it in every time you want to play) and when everything is jodson, RUN the program. When OK appears on the screen type SYS 49152 (RETURN) and 'press play on tape' to load and run the program.

```
KNUCKLEBUSTERS LISTING

0 PRINT CHR$(147) "PLEASE WAIT"
1 DEF FNR(A)=PEEK(A)+PEEK(A+1)*256
2 I=49152
3 READ A:T=T+A:IF A=256 THEN PRINT "OK":END
4 IF A256 AND A<348 AND A>344 THEN T=T+345
5 IF A>256 THEN C=A:T=T-A:IF T<>C THEN
PRINT "DATA ERROR IN LINE" FNR(63):END
6 IF A>256 THEN C=0:T=0:GOTO 3
7 POKE I,A:I=I+1:GOTO 3
10 DATA 169, 1, 168, 170, 32, 186, 255, 169, 1150
20 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 1145
30 DATA 23, 133, 2, 162, 67, 160, 192, 169, 908
40 DATA 181, 134, 251, 132, 252, 133, 253, 162, 1498
50 DATA 4, 134, 254, 162, 0, 161, 251, 129, 1095
60 DATA 253, 230, 251, 208, 2, 230, 252, 230, 1656
70 DATA 253, 208, 2, 230, 254, 198, 2, 16, 1163
80 DATA 236, 169, 0, 133, 2, 234, 234, 234, 1242
90 DATA 76, 94, 192, 174, 2, 0, 188, 132, 858
100 DATA 1, 185, 171, 1, 72, 185, 170, 1, 786
110 DATA 72, 96, 32, 244, 4, 138, 105, 5, 696
120 DATA 141, 2, 0, 234, 234, 234, 162, 89, 1096
130 DATA 189, 107, 192, 157, 87, 1, 202, 208, 1143
140 DATA 247, 76, 247, 192, 169, 55, 133, 1, 1120
150 DATA 32, 2, 253, 169, 27, 141, 17, 208, 849
160 DATA 32, 167, 2, 32, 167, 2, 76, 49, 527
170 DATA 2, 32, 244, 4, 188, 41, 5, 138, 654
180 DATA 105, 6, 141, 2, 0, 177, 174, 145, 750
190 DATA 253, 136, 208, 249, 120, 76, 180, 4, 1226
200 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 345
210 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 345
220 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 347
230 DATA 0, 0, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 347
240 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 4, 195, 4, 108, 311
250 DATA 1, 87, 1, 76, 49, 2, 162, 378
260 DATA 2, 189, 43, 2, 157, 138, 144, 189, 864
270 DATA 46, 2, 157, 130, 144, 202, 16, 241, 938
280 DATA 169, 173, 141, 184, 171, 76, 0, 109, 1023
290 DATA 76, 141, 144, 76, 133, 144, 162, 2, 878
300 DATA 189, 63, 2, 157, 138, 8, 202, 16, 775
310 DATA 247, 76, 40, 8, 76, 18, 2, 162, 629
320 DATA 47, 189, 199, 192, 157, 18, 2, 202, 1006
330 DATA 16, 247, 76, 144, 4, 254, 256, 997
```

AVENGER (Gremlin Graphics)

Okey dokey, all you failing *Avengers*, cop a load of this. It's an unlimited energy listing from Tim and Ian Fraser. All you have to do is type in the listing, RUN it, and follow the on-screen instructions.

```
AVENGER LISTING

10 DEF FNR(A)=PEEK(A)+PEEK(A+1)*256
20 POKE 53280,6:PRINT CHR$(5) CHR$(147)
"PLEASE WAIT"
30 I=49152
40 READ A: T=T+A:IF A=256 THEN 80
50 IF A<256 THEN POKE I,A:I=I+1:GOTO 40
60 C=A:T=T-A:IF T<>C THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR IN LINE" FNR(63):END
70 C=0:T=0:GOTO 40
80 PRINT CHR$(147) CHR$(131) "OK – SAVE LIST-
ING FOR FUTURE USE":PRINT
90 PRINT "TYPE SYS 49152 TO LOAD AND RUN
AVENGER":END
100 DATA 169, 1, 168, 170, 32, 186, 255, 169, 1150
110 DATA 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 169, 1145
120 DATA 0, 133, 193, 133, 174, 133, 147, 169, 1082
130 DATA 4, 133, 194, 169, 8, 133, 175, 32, 848
140 DATA 165, 245, 120, 169, 53, 133, 1, 169, 1055
150 DATA 0, 141, 17, 208, 160, 0, 162, 0, 688
160 DATA 173, 64, 4, 93, 0, 4, 141, 64, 543
170 DATA 4, 232, 224, 64, 208, 242, 238, 49, 1261
180 DATA 192, 208, 3, 238, 50, 192, 238, 55, 1176
190 DATA 192, 208, 3, 238, 56, 192, 200, 192, 1281
200 DATA 216, 208, 219, 162, 0, 189, 64, 4, 1062
210 DATA 149, 0, 232, 224, 216, 208, 246, 162, 1437
220 DATA 217, 189, 255, 255, 157, 17, 2, 202, 1294
230 DATA 208, 247, 162, 2, 189, 137, 192, 157, 1294
240 DATA 152, 2, 189, 140, 192, 157, 220, 2, 1054
250 DATA 202, 16, 241, 162, 13, 189, 143, 192, 1158
260 DATA 157, 235, 2, 202, 16, 247, 76, 161, 1096
270 DATA 2, 76, 235, 2, 76, 57, 2, 169, 619
280 DATA 173, 141, 18, 25, 141, 44, 25, 141, 708
290 DATA 76, 25, 76, 148, 46, 371, 256
```

MIKIE (Imagine)

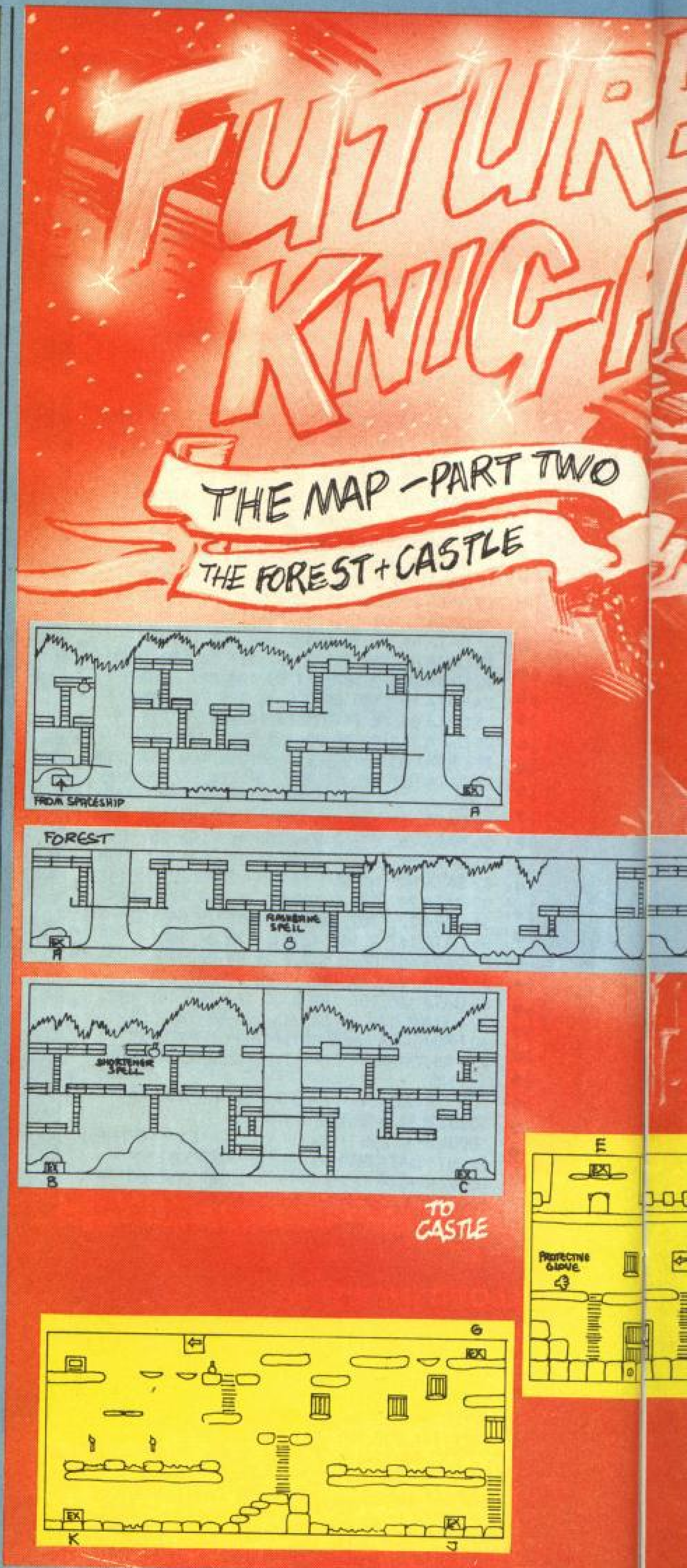
On each of *Mikie*'s five screens there's a secret bonus to be had. Finding them is made easy with the advice sent in by Paul Woodhouse **of Sheffield.**

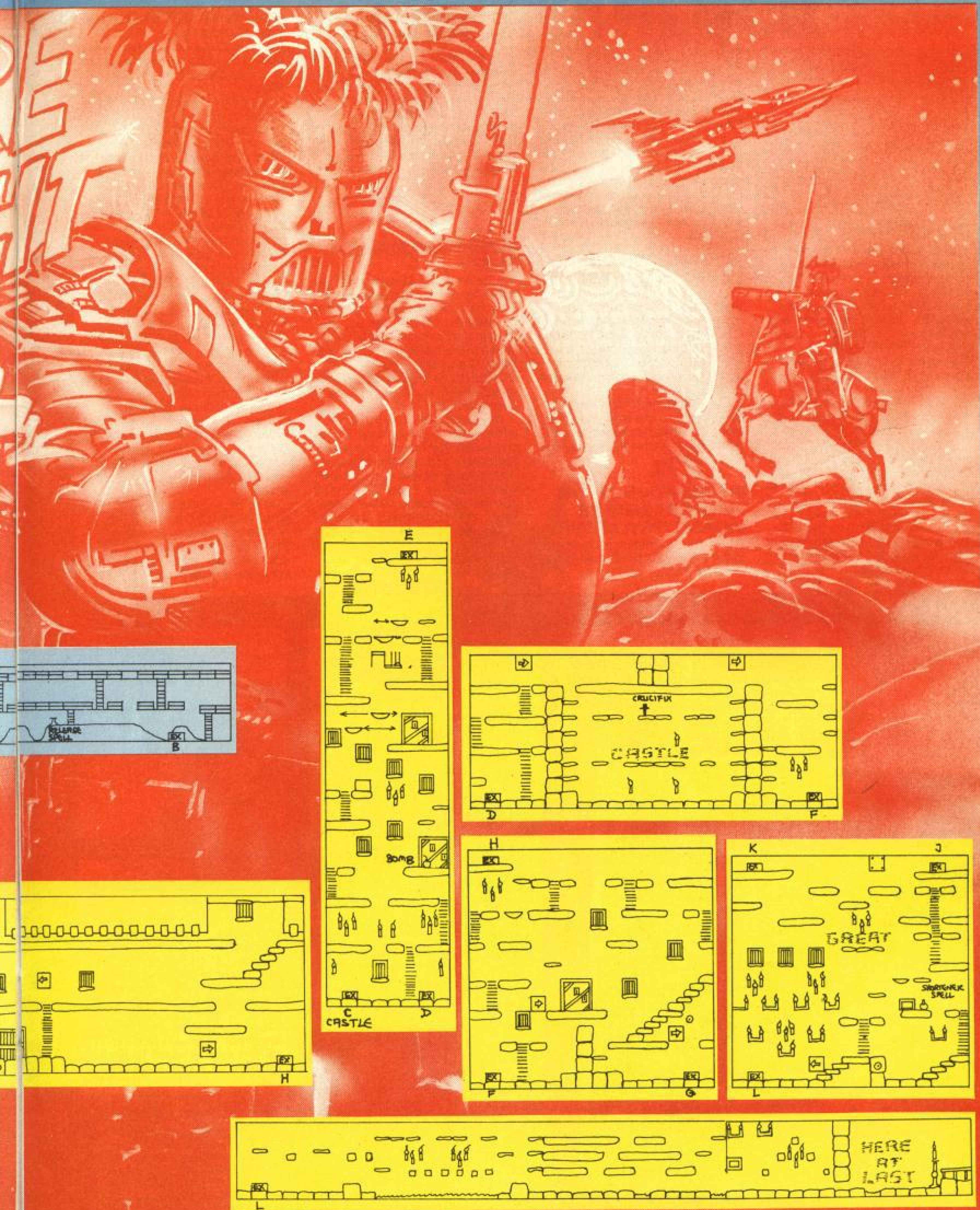
SCREEN ONE: Walk up to the middle of the teacher's table, press shout three times and a grid of nine letters appears, giving a bonus of 1,000 points.
SCREEN TWO: Walk up to the middle of the top row of lockers and press shout three times – 1,000 points are yours.
SCREEN THREE: Another 1,000 point increase is gained by walking up to the middle of the self-service canteen at the top of the screen and shouting three times.
SCREEN FOUR: Stand facing the left speaker and shout three times for yet another 1,000 points.
SCREEN FIVE: Walk up to the bottom left wall. Stand in the middle and shout three times. You guessed it, it nets you exactly 1,000 points.
By the way, on the first screen collecting the spinning white hearts gleans another 1,000 points.

SUPER HUEY II (US Gold)

Here's a useful tip for those who are having problems with the rescue mission. The instructions don't really explain anything about rescue procedure, so here's some help courtesy of M Edwards **from Winshill, Burton-on-Trent.**

Firstly, clear the on-board computer by pressing the Hash key and typing HOM (RETURN). Use the Plus or Minus keys to change Navigation Radio Frequency. When you see a Small Light illuminate to the right of this dial you know you have found a Signal, so press the Rescue on Radar key (*). Take off, making sure that you keep your eye on the Rescue Heading Dial for any changes in direction. Change your Compass Heading so it is always the same as the Rescue Heading. When you find Scientists, the Ground Radar Blip circles the centre of the Radar Screen.





RELEASE SPELL
B
E
EX
CRUCIFIX
CASTLE
D
F
BOMB
C
CASTLE
H
G
K
J
GREAT
SHRINKER SPELL
L
HERE AT LAST



'SOME SET UP!'

VERA CRUZ

(Infogrames)

Ailing detectives! Gather ye round and take heed of the advice sent in by Jeff and Ped of Goole, North Humberside. The intrepid duo have managed to solve the *Vera Cruz* mystery and are sharing their notes with the rest of the world. Read on, digest, go forth and bring evil-doers to justice . . .

'WAS THAT WITH GARY COOPER?'

A quick, but important note before we start. When you start part two type in the following items: BUTTON, CARNET, MATCHES, MAC 50, ROTHMANS, CARTRIDGE, CAMEL, ASHTRAY, LETTER and COTTON THREAD. When you've done this, get a statement from Vera Cruz's next door neighbour – no address is needed for that. The next action is to get a statement from the Caretaker. Again, no address is needed.

THE BEGINNING

If you open the diary in Part One (by pressing the space bar) three names are revealed – Eva Delarue of the Transport Cafe in Givours, Nadine Lafeuill who lives at 2 Balay Street, St Etienne, and Fuzzy who hangs out at the Bar of Poplars. Eva tells you about a man called Hubert Debroche, who lives at the Jewellers in St Etienne. If you get a statement from him, he tells you about the murder of his wife. When this information is revealed type (in the messages section) CIAT ST ETIENNE.

INFORMATION ON THE DELROCHE AFFAIR

This information tells you about the murder of Mme Delroche, mentions name Phil and the 9mm Cartridge case (identical to the one in Part One) and also has a few notes about a BMW which had also been seen by the Caretaker of Vera Cruz.

Get a statement from Nadine Lafeuillee and she tells you about a Gypsy. In the messages section, type CRRJ LYON followed by GIE ST GALMIER.

INFORMATION ON THE PHILIBERT ZIEGLER (ALIAS GYPSY) AFFAIR

When the information is given go to the messages section and type PRIS ST PAUL.

INFORMATION ABOUT PHILIBERT ZIEGLER

His address is Carnot Square, St Etienne. Get a statement to find two new names – Georges Lerat (no information can be found about him) and Gilles Blanc. In Ziegler's statement he says that he is not Vera's pimp, although he did receive money from her. Go to messages and type CRRJ LYON.

INFORMATION ABOUT FUZZY

You're now given Fuzzy's name, allowing you to get a statement from him using Bar of Poplars as his address. He tells you about Ziegler and a man named Blanc. When this information is gathered press C and type PHILIBERT ZIEGLER to find out that Vera was afraid of him, and that Phil corresponds with Philibert.

Now type CRRJ LYON to get information on Gilles Blanc. Doing so reveals that he was convicted for receiving stolen goods and he is suspected of taking part in two bank robberies. Type CIAT LYON and get information on the Gilles Blanc affair. Information says that an accomplice called Stan could not be found. Get a statement from Blanc (he is found at 2 Station Street). He says that he was playing cards that night with Stanislas Kowaski, who lives at 310 BIS, Cours E, Zola, Villeurbanne. Get a statement from him and he says he was playing cards with Gilles Blanc.

Now type PREF LYON (identification number 9111 CQ 69) to get the name and address of the car owner – Philippe Blanc, 32 Terrcause Square, Lyon. Go and get a statement from him. Type CRRJ LYON to get information regarding the 9mm cartridges and type GIE CLERMONT for information on the Gunsmiths affair. If you go and get another statement from Philibert Ziegler, he admits to being Vera's pimp.

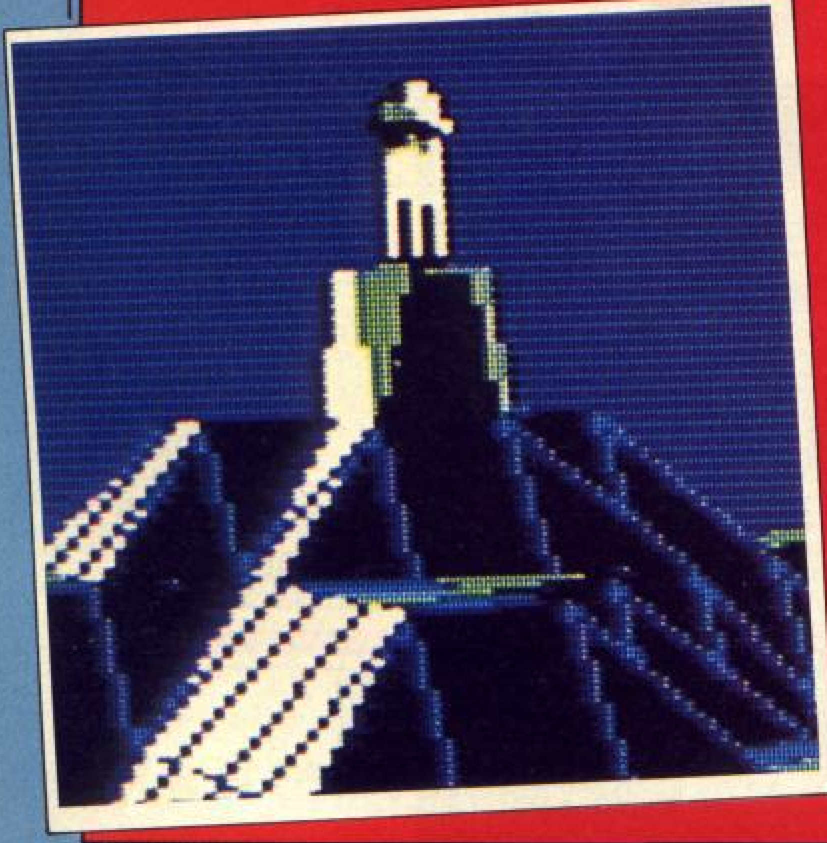
Type BDRJ ST ETIENNE for the identification of Philippe Blanc. This tells you about the murder of Brigadier Lerouse. Now type CIAT PARIS to find out that Brigadier Lerouse had to have been murdered by Philippe Blanc. Now get a statement from Stanilous Kowaski, and then statements from Philippe and Gilles Blanc.

Type C and type Philippe Blanc. He passes the 9mm cartridges, the button matches his shirt and his military service was 82 RI (Chermont – Farrand). Now do the same with Gilles.

After this type E and type Graphological. The computer responds Whose handwriting? Type Gilles Blanc. Now type A and arrest Philippe and Giles Blanc to solve the murder!

THE SENTINEL (Firebird)

What a weird POKE – it gives you X-Ray vision, as well as the ability to absorb things after you've ousted The Sentinel from his lofty position. Yes, all very difficult to believe, but try it out. Firstly load the program and then reset the computer. Now enter POKE 1212,12:POKE 9462,173 (RETURN) and SYS 16128 to restart the game.



BOMBJACK II (Elite)

Why don't you? . . . load *BombJack II* and reset your computer. Why don't you? . . . type POKE 7053,200 (RETURN) and SYS 3303 (RETURN) to restart. Why don't you? . . . become a happy Jack with unlimited energy. Good old Paul Stapley of Whitby, N Yorks – he's the man responsible for that useful POKE.

MUTANTS (Ocean)

Here come the Farnworth Cracking Service with an unlimited lives POKE. It messes up the graphics somewhat, but otherwise everything's hunky dory. Load the program and reset the computer. Type POKE 9273,230 (RETURN) and then SYS 4096 (RETURN) to restart the program with enough men to crush an infinite amount of marauding Muties.

KRAKOUT (Gremlin Graphics)

Do you know that *Krakout* has a cheat mode? Yes it does, and all you have to do to activate it is enter (C) on the high-score table. You get infinite lives for doing this, but no score. Ah well, cheaters can't be high-scorers, as the ancient chinese proverb goes. Neil Smith and Edward Healy, both from Yardley in Birmingham, spotted that particular tip.

MICRORHYTHM (Firebird)

Yes, a POKE for this. Actually, it's for those people who can't access the gong (which should go BO-N-N-N-G when the 'up arrow' key is pressed). If you're suffering these symptoms load the program and reset the computer. Enter POKE 10429,13:SYS 7103 (RETURN) to rectify the apparent keyboard reading routine error. Thanks to Jim Blackler of Lancaster for that highly original POKE.

And we reach termination point. Fact: a couple of T-shirts and some free software are currently winging their way to Tim and Ian Fraser's house in Ruislip, Middlesex. Fact: Commodore owners out there need YOUR help. Fact: if you send in your POKEs, maps, solutions or tips to ZZAP! TIPS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB, they could well be published. Fact: see you next month in a different time, and more than likely different place . . .


Nemesis
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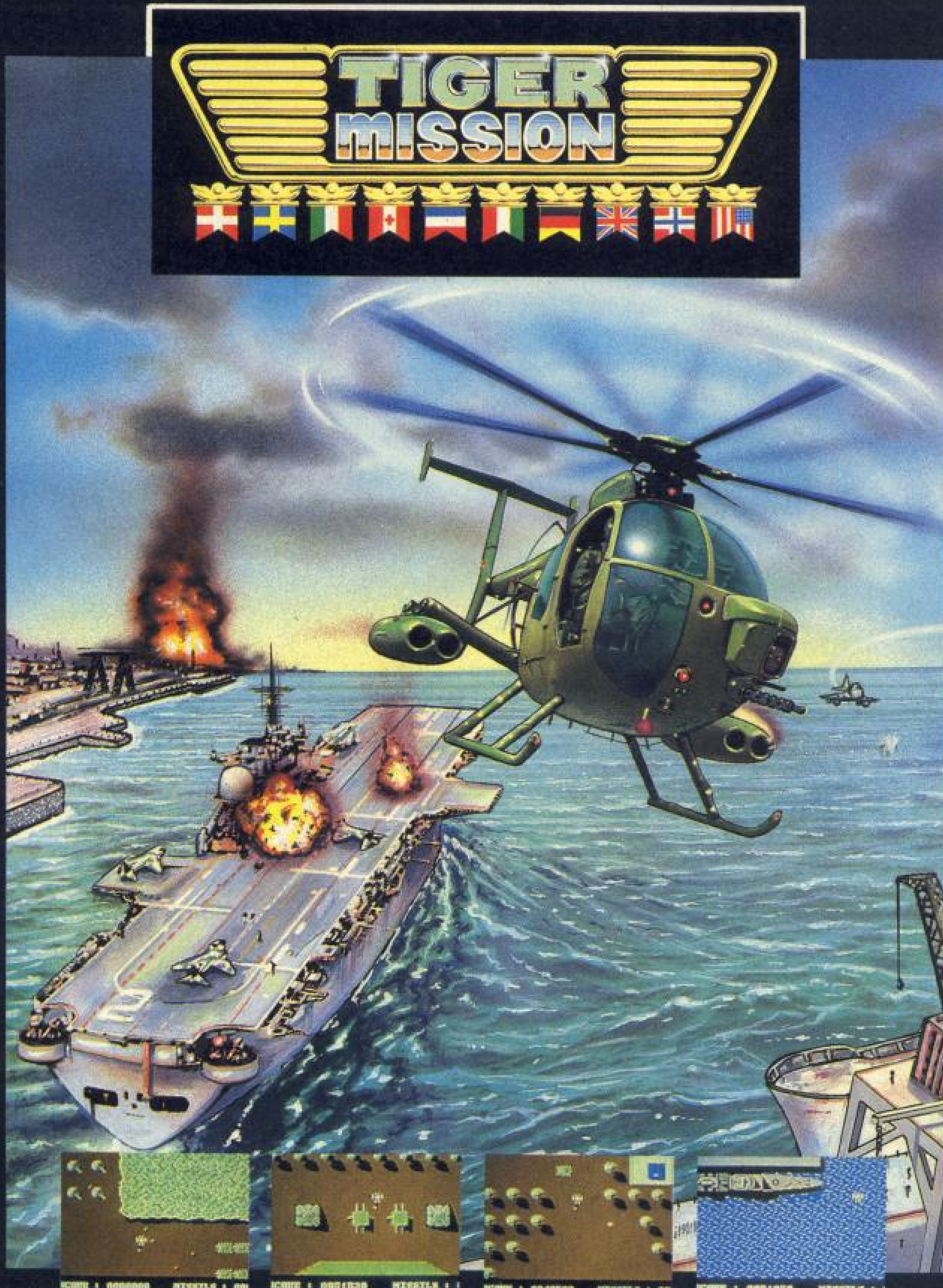
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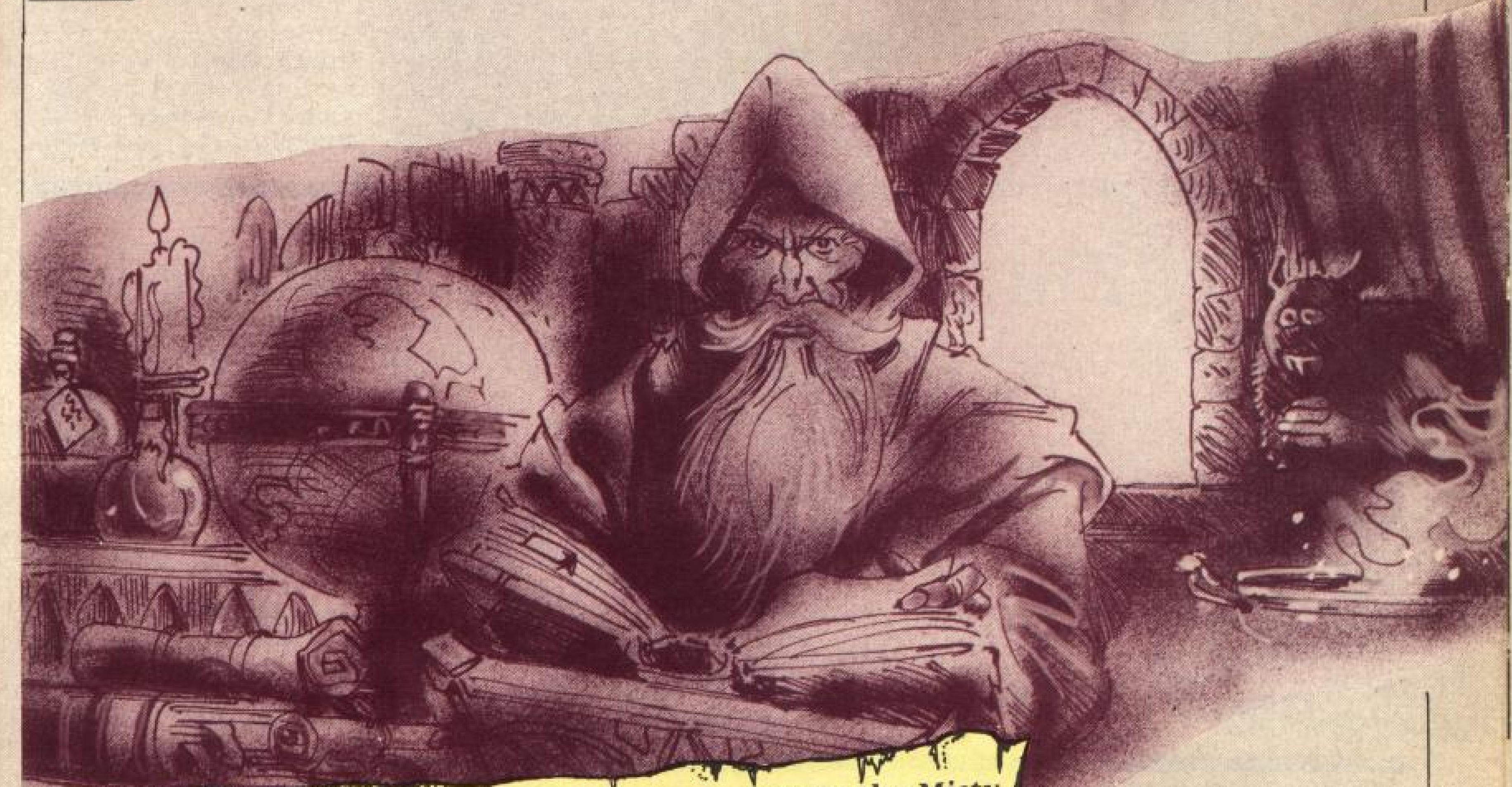


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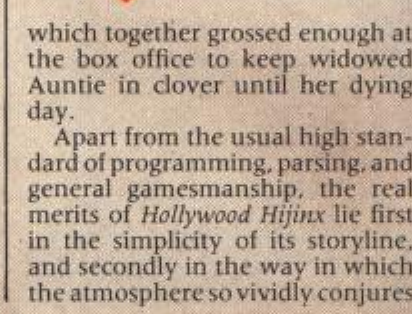
ZZAP! adventure



Ahoy there Wand Wielders! From his cavern deep in the Misty Mountains, crouched over the keyboard as dawn sweeps over the Iron Hills, the Bearded One taps out this epistle to adventurers across the world. This month we range from the sublimely expensive to the outrageously budget, from Infocom's Hollywood Hijinx **to petite gamettes from Mastertronic and Code Masters. Does price matter? Is budget untass? Or can we really get toning for £1.99? Put aside that potion of pulverised frog's nipple and get the low-down from Ol' Whitey . . .**

Hollywood Hijinx

Infocom/Activision, £24.95 disk only



Well I have to admit that this is NOT what I would have expected from Infocom at this stage of their illustrious career. Don't get me wrong – it's not a bad game . . . easily up to their usual praiseworthy standards – but the scenario came as something of a surprise.

Hollywood Hijinx is basically a treasure hunt – at least it is as far as I've progressed with it. A good, ol' fashioned grab-the-artifact number. Forget the Underground Empire, however, as this little ditty takes place in a luxurious Hollywood mansion, left to you by your recently-deceased, fabulously wealthy Aunt Hildegarde.

Well, not quite left to you, actually. In order to inherit limitless wealth, Auntie's will stipulates that you must spend the night in her house, and locate ten treasures within it or around it before morning. That gives you 12 hours of game time, or 720 real life moves. Each treasure is a keepsake from one of Uncle Buddy's movies, which together grossed enough at the box office to keep widowed Auntie in clover until her dying day.

Apart from the usual high standard of programming, parsing, and general gamesmanship, the real merits of *Hollywood Hijinx* lie first in the simplicity of its storyline, and secondly in the way in which the atmosphere so vividly conjures up all the trivia of Tinsel Town. If you have to stay tone in Tone Town, you need to be on first name terms with Sonny Tofts and Douglas Fairbanks – not that you're likely to meet them, it's just that the whole aura of the locations shimmers with reflections from the silver screen.

So there are vast patios for garden parties, doorbells that play movie theme music, statues of Rambo's relatives in the garden, and numerous gadgets and props from assorted B Movies. And of course, amongst all this dross there are ten treasures.

Now we come to the nitty gritty. At least half of these treasures are fairly easy to locate. One of them is even visible without even needing to search for it, but in a style reminiscent of the infuriatingly devious Scott Adams, seeing it is one thing but actually getting your mitts on it is quite another.

However, for the first time ever with an Infocom game, I found myself wondering whether this adventure was not perhaps a little too easy. There's no doubt that getting everything inside 720 moves is pretty nigh impossible on the first attempt, or even on the fifth – but I reckon you might do it on the tenth. And since it doesn't take too long to notch up 720 moves, that leaves me wondering whether there's as much meat here as there is in, say, *Hitch Hikers*. ▶

For example there is a positively ENORMOUS maze, which I reckon must have over 150 locations, and which would normally keep even the most experienced adventurer busy for hours on end. I say normally, because even here the spectre of simple solutions hangs over us – there is actually a map of the maze hidden in the game. The Wiz found it within about ten minutes of starting play (whether from luck or from sheer outrageous genius, only comparison with others' attempts will show) but ten minutes to solve a puzzle of that dimension just ain't enough for Ol' Whitey.

Maps apart, however, the size of that maze really puts this game on the . . . er . . . map, especially when taken with a host of other appealing puzzles involving cannons, computers, mechanical closets, spinning statues and no end of other gimmickry. You also get those wonderful long text descriptions that Infocom excel at, and that make you wonder why other adventure software houses seem unable to string more than a couple of sentences together without sending half the population to sleep.

So, it's a change from the more recent fashion for lots of communication with other characters and a return to the old sport of inventory-boosting. There are only ten things to get, which sharpens the mind wonderfully, and despite the slight qualms about the ease of the game – at least in the first half – Ol' Whitey reckons that you can't go far wrong with this one at £1.99. Ooops . . . Silly me, this isn't one of those BUDGET games, is it? That comes next. In the meantime, buy *Hollywood Hijinx* anyway.

Atmosphere	93%
Interaction	93%
Lasting Interest	87%
Value For Money	85%
Overall	**90%**

Kobyashi Naru

Mastertronic, £1.99 cassette

Once upon a time there were lots of little people in attics writing adventure software for the Spectrum computer. These games had tiny vocabularies, no pictures, and the puzzles were often very difficult. Ask anyone who triumphed over the early Artic games what it means to be *really* stuck in an adventure!

Nowadays we still get games with tiny vocabularies, but usually they are subtly disguised as something else. *Kobyashi Naru* is one of these, but don't let that put you off – I reckon that for the throwaway price it's worth a fling, if only to get your penny's worth of frustration.

This adventure has a very original screen presentation – lots of icons scattered around the top which you select with keyboard or joystick. Suppose you select USE . . . The program then highlights one of the words in the location description, or an item from your inventory and you move this highlight until you settle upon the word depicting the item you wish to USE. Then you press FIRE (or the space bar) and the command is executed. My only grouse is that if you select QUIT by mistake you don't get asked for confirmation and find yourself right back at the beginning of the game before you can say Kobywhatsitsname.

That's quite a neat little system for £1.99. The game itself involves choosing one of three quests and returning from it with an object – get the three correct objects and you join with the immortals, having completed the Naru and entered the Order.

Harmless claptrap; nice screen design; unusual gameplay system; infuriating puzzles; some nice small-scale graphics that show your current location, the objects you carry, and occasional textual reports on your surroundings; and various little bits of scrolling window display and a nice redesigned character set . . . Well now, that's not a bad list for £1.99, is it? If you've got money to waste, why not waste it? And if you haven't, don't fret, because you're not missing anything earth-shaking.

Atmosphere	55%
Interaction	58%
Lasting Interest	57%
Value For Money	72%
Overall	**62%**

Necris Dome

Codemasters, £1.99 cassette

More claptrap. This time the change in your pocket buys you a ticket to the Necris Dome, a vast floating cemetery in space. There the Archmandroid has turned renegade, and now threatens humanity with horrible weapons of destruction – Eeek!

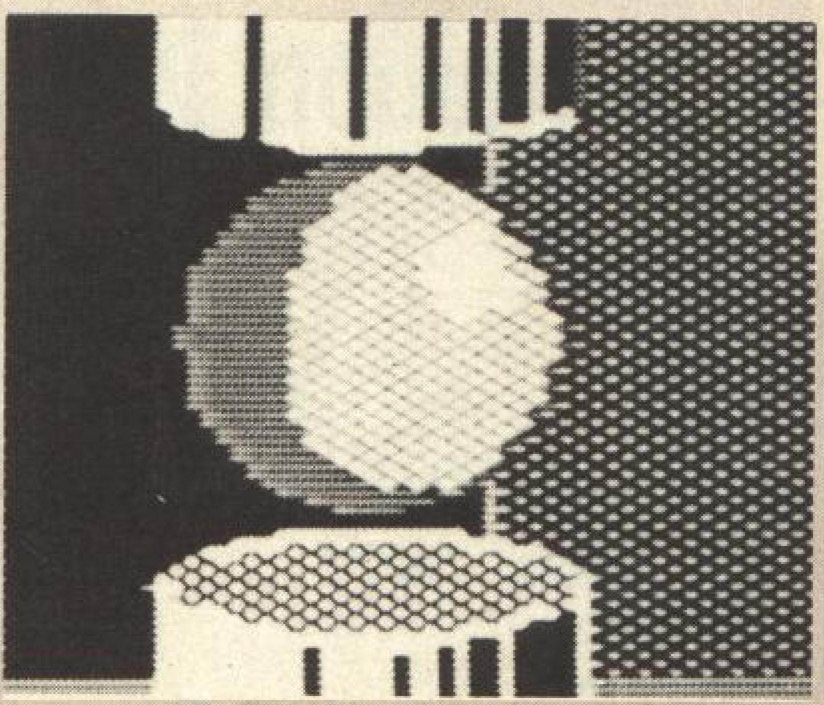
Unlike the Khuby-doo we've just looked at, *Necris Dome* is rather more conventional, being a product of *GAC*. Some of the graphics are really quite attractive but as is usual with cheapo games a lot of the locations look depressingly familiar. It seems as if most spaceships in adventure games are constructed of one or two basic parts, rearranged in each location to give an impression of variety. The method works, but only just . . .

The location descriptions in *Necris Dome*, the logic of the game and the details of the objects you find leave a lot to be desired. There are Mandroids, Battledroids and Re-Ans (and Heaven knows what a lot of them are). Luckily the publishers have guessed that you might feel a bit confused, so they've included some hints in the cover blurb. Thank goodness.

Again, for £1.99 what can you say? I've seen better – even at this price. But if you're keen to key-bash and there's nothing else I doubt whether the price will be high enough to put you off. Personally I'd save up for an Infocom game, but then I'm a spoiled old Wizard . . .

Atmosphere	57%
Interaction	57%
Lasting Interest	55%
Value For Money	69%
Overall	**60%**





Wizards Mailbag

White Wizard 1 US Gold/ Adventuresoft 0



Oh well. I suppose it was inevitable. The Wand Wielder tried to be honest, fair, and outspoken about *Masters of the Universe*, and now I gather that Mike Woodroffe of Adventuresoft is very upset and US Gold are considering not sending any more Adventuresoft games in for review.

Well, I could go on and on about this, but I'll try to be brief. First, I made every attempt in the review both to make it clear that what was written was my own personal opinion and secondly to give Adventuresoft every possible benefit of the doubt by stating categorically that they had the talent to produce a good game. It's just that, in my opinion, *Masters of the Universe* wasn't it.

I suggested to Mr Penn (or perhaps he suggested to me, I forget) that Mike be invited to say his piece about the game on these illustrious pages. That should be evidence of the esteem in which I hold him – there aren't many mortals who get that opportunity without making substantial sacrificial offerings. I hope Mike takes up the offer.

As for US Gold saying they won't send any more games for review – well, I simply can't understand it. In his rare materialisations on the mortal plane, the Wiz is (amongst other things) a playwright by profession. Every so often one of my plays gets torn to shreds by the critics and I lose a lot of money. When that happens I do one of three things: take no notice; listen to the criticism and take note; or listen to the criticism and say that in my opinion the critic is wrong.

If the critic is wrong, it's either because he's personally biased, in which case I make every effort to state my own case, or because we simply disagree. Either way, the day I stop inviting critics to see my plays will be the day my plays stop selling.

So either US Gold think I'm biased – which I'm not (and I made that clear in the article) or else they've got some other reason to kick up a fuss. Let's hope they let us know which it is. In the meantime, I stand by the review and perhaps I'll get the chance in future to write others, and perhaps they'll be as favourable as this one was hostile.

Sorry, that wasn't very brief, was it?

Mags Galore

Mags this month from **H&D Services** – £1.50 for a pretty zarjaz collection of adventure tips from **1338 Ashton Old Road, Higher Openshaw, Manchester M11 1JG; Adventure Contact**, £1 for tone tips on *GAC* and the *Quill*, plus marketing advice on how to sell your games, from **13 Hollington Way, Wigan WN3 6LS**. Also **Adventure Probe, 78 Merton Road, Wigan WN3 6AT** – bits 'n' bobs 'n' clues, very worthwhile for £1

Mueller Resurfaces

Henry Mueller of the **Adventure Club**, last reported missing by Pete Austin of Level 9, is back in action again and has written in to the Wiz. The club would therefore appear to be still thriving, and the address is **64c Menelik road, London NW2 3RH**.

King Crimson

Just who is this man? He claims to know the identity of the Nameless One and – Ye Gods! – his claim is true! But does he return the favour? No, he just skulks behind his pinko-subversive pseudonym!

His letter, however, is of interest, and I quote at length: *"In the end, these publications* (**Adventure Probe, Adventure Contact** – see above) *seem linked by the desires of the nation to create adventure games itself, without the need to learn machine code or the endless list of adventure writing spells that would put off even the most learned wizard.*

"I thoroughly approve of such utilities as Incentive's GAC, as otherwise the public would be deprived of the chance to enter into the spirit of writing an adventure game. Why should that spirit only serve the larger companies? Are they any better at actually writing a game? Often a writer sat at home with his or her computer can offer a great deal more interest than some of the larger companies who are obsessed with repeating the same old themes.

"Of course it is a double-edged sword, my friend, as at present no adventure-writing utility can match the depth put into an Infocom game. There is no reason why this cannot be, however, as every company relies on some system to design their games, such as Level 9's 'A-Code' and Ram Jam's 'The Biro'. They just aren't selling them to the public as it would provide far too much competition!

"It is interesting to note that some companies actually rely heavily upon the Quill *to write their games, such as St Brides and Delta 4. Are they being a little lazy by doing so? Should they update to the GAC ? Well, perhaps, but the* Quill *does allow for a lot of customisation, as CRL have shown by coupling it with digitised pictures in* Dracula. *Of course the heart of any adventure system is the parser, and the* Quill *'s parser is getting old. Not to worry though, Gilsoft are shortly bringing out a superb system called the* Professional Adventure Writer, *or* PAW *for short . . . "*

Yes, the Wiz has indeed heard of *PAW*, and of course we'll be covering it as soon as we can get hold of a copy. In the meantime, O Crimson One, I must sadly relate that the Wiz's highly pressured timetable has not allowed him to introduce the new Adventure Rrap section as soon as he would like. Since this time pressure problem is liable to continue for the next three issues at least, how about contributing something yourself? Perhaps even something quite substantial? Oh . . . Anonymously, of course!

Naughty Contacts!

After the Wiz's threats concerning people using the Clever Contacts page to sell adventure solutions, I had a couple of letters, the first from **Helen Goddard**, of Dagenham.

"I agree with you that the 'Clever Contacts' slot should only be for those offering FREE HELP, as I would imagine that a great number of ZZAP! readers are still at school."

The second I received was from the gentleman who had his name removed from the list last month for attempting to sell solutions. He was extremely angry and even mentioned the word 'solicitor' in his letter. Since I did him the favour of not mentioning his name, I'm mystified as to why he should be so irate – especially as he says I got the facts wrong, and then proceeds to repeat them himself!

Listen, let's not get too worked up over this. Perhaps I was rather authoritarian in tone last month. The issue at stake is really quite simple. The 'Clever Contacts' column is for people who want to make contact with other people, either by offering or receiving help. It is *not* a market place. If we start getting people in that column offering goods for sale – whatever they may be – then very soon people will cotton on and start using it as a free advertising spot.

As I said last month – there's nothing wrong with selling adventure solutions. But not, please, through Clever Contacts. I, and I'm sure most readers, want to be able to get in touch with the Contacts without the taint of commerce – however innocent or well-intentioned it may be. So please, readers, if you get offers of goods for sale through the column, let me know so that appropriate action can be taken. Those whose names have been removed I will quite happily reinstate, but only providing they give me an assurance that they will not use the column for the sale of goods. ▶

Wizard Tips!

Here are this month's timely tips . . . Many thanks to all those who contributed this month. Don't forget that collections of tips are always welcome for publication.

Special thanks this time to **James Duffy** of Coventry, **Richard Pugh** of Winchester, **S J Keeley** of Maidenhead, **Colin Turley** of Wirral, and **Brett Buckley** of Huddersfield.

Tass Times In Tone Town
Wear the silver gloves to handle the devils. Buy blobpet, go digging in the sandy patch. Turn on, type Yes, type Ennio, take pass at the terminal. Give pass to Stelcad. Take photos later!

The Pawn
Inside the Tree Room, Close the Door and Move the Floorboard. In Residential Area down from Tree Room, take Cushion to find Cash. Push the Pedestal, get Key from Niche, go to Plateau, Melt Snowman with White, take Spiky Boots from Storeroom, Go Up and Unlock Door. If you have the Horse, put the Princess on it, get on it, and ride out. If not, Tie Rope to the Bed, Open the Window, and Scale the Wall. Make the horse carry all your equipment. The Alchemists want the Rice that the Guru has. In the Lift, DON'T close or open it – slide it. In Gringo's Voting Office, Move Rug to find a Safe. Try knocking down the Cream Door.

Dracula
To survive freezing in the coach, LIFT SEAT, then use your crucifix as a key – PUT CROSS, TURN CROSS.

Lord of the Rings
To enter Moria, read page 401 of book. If you're still stuck, it sounds like a fruit with an extra letter. The route through Moria – keep going East . . . If you choose to avoid Moria, go East from Caradhras. Sam can kill the black riders with his sword. The Plant Pot holds more than you might think. To cross the ford, find Glorfindel, get rid of him, get on his horse with your companions, and give the horse directions – S, E, E, E.

Keep In Touch!

The Wiz always welcomes correspondence on all matters adventorial, and will do his best to include them on these pages. Contributions to the Tips section are doubly welcome.

You can contact the White Wand Wielder at: **The White Wizards Dungeon, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ** . . . Or by modem on BT Gold 83:JNL251. Stay Tone!

It's a MUG's Game . . .

Our two part series on MUGs, started two months back and still has one part to run. This covers SHADES and other tidbits of information on the world of On-Line Adventurous Interaction. We need a little more space to do the subject justice than was available this month, so stay tuned for the June issue, when we cast light on SHADES . . .

Clever Contacts

Nick Carter's first on to the Contacts list this month. Nick is a veteran adventurer (who's solved even more games than the Wiz!), and is always quite happy to chat about them – but only between the hours of 2pm and 10pm. He writes: *"Many of the adventures I have done with the help of* **Bob Shepherd** *of Coalville, Leicester – much to the delight of British Telecom no doubt – also I must mention* **Rod Jones** *of Derby for the help he has given me on some of the games, and* **Barry Yeomans** *of Luton for friendly chats on adventures and general computer matters."*

Incidentally, Nick has sent Ol' Whitey the largest collection of adventure solutions I think I have ever received. Many thanks Nick, and I hope that all your balrogs are small ones.

Margot Stuckey must be wondering what has happened to the second half of her list of games. Each month we say 'More next month . . .', but the fact is that the Wiz can't find Margot's letter to enter the next batch. Perhaps Margot could get in touch again with the full list . . . Sorry, m'dear . . .

Just one last word – PLEASE do not telephone contacts at antisocial hours – that is after 10 pm or before 10 am. And if you write, make sure you enclose a SAE.

Adventureland, Adventure Quest, Arrow of Death I & II, Ballyhoo, Blade of Blackpoole, Borrowed Time, Buckaroo Banzai, Castle of Terror, Circus, Colditz, Crystals of Carus, Cutthroats, Dallas Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Empire of Karn, Enchanter, Erik the Viking, Escape from Pulsar 7, Espionage Island, Eye of Bain, Feasibility Experiment, Forest at the Worlds End, Ghost Town, Golden Voyage, Gremlins, Gruds in Space, Hampstead, Heroes of Karn, Infidel, Invincible Island, Kayleth, Kentilla, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Lucifers Realm, Magicians Ball, Magic Stone, Mask of the Sun, Mindshadow, Mission Asteroid, Moonmist, Mordon's Quest, Mystery Funhouse, Mystery of Munroe Manor, Ninja, Perseus and Andromeda, Pharaohs Tomb, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Pyramid of Doom, Rebel Planet, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Ring of Power, Robin of Sherwood, Savage Island I, Secret Mission, Ship of Doom, Sorceror, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spiderman, Strange Odyssey, Tass Times, Ten Little Indians, The Count, Golden Baton, Hobbit, The Institute, Jewels of Babylon, The Journey, Never Ending Story, Pawn, Time Machine, Wizard and Princess, Quest of Merravid, Tower of Despair, Tracer Sanction, Twin Kingdom Valley, Ultima I, III & IV, Urban Upstart, Ulysses and the Golden Fleece, Valkyrie 17, Velnors Lair, Voodoo Castle, Warlords, Waxworks, Winter Wonderland, Wishbringer, Witches Cauldron, Wizard Akyrz, Wrath of Magra, Zork I, II & III, Zzzzz . . .
Nick Carter, Southampton
Tel: (0703) 474777 2 pm to 10 pm ONLY

Heroes of Karn, Bored of the Rings, Gremlins, Voodoo Castle, Zim Zala Bim, Mugsys Revenge, Tropical Adventure, Dracula, Holy Grail, The Pawn, Return to Oz, Masters of the Universe, Robin of Sherwood, Fourth Protocol, Price of Magik
Christophe Brassart, 67 rue de l'Abbe Lemire, 59200 TOURCOING, France

Sherlock, Gremlins, Hulk, Spiderman, Fourth Protocol, Dallas Quest, Terrormolinos, Hobbit, Castle of Terror Parlapas Aris, 18 Pyrsinella Str 453 32, Ioannina, Greece Pawn, Tass Times, Borrowed Time, Tracer Sanction, Mindshadow, Starcross, Wishbringer, Seastalker, Ballyhoo, Enchanter, Sorceror, Spellbreaker, Leather Goddesses, Hitchhikers, Hulk, Spiderman, Fantastic Four, Gremlins, Red Moon, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Worm in Paradise, Dungeon Adventure, Colossal Adven-



ture, Return to Eden, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Nine Princes in Amber, Pilgrim, Perseus and Andromeda
Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA Tel: 0227 274846 10 am to 8 pm ONLY

Tower of Despair, Dracula, Adventureland, Zim Zala Bim, Castle of Terror, Time Tunnel, Eureka
John Paterson, 8 Bracadale Road, Baillieston, Glasgow G69 Tel: 041 771 7729

Morden's Quest, Spiderman, Hacker
Nigel 'Nemesis' Richardson Tel: 01 360 8325

Pirate Adventure, Circus, Zzzz, Terrormolinos, Subsunk, The Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Quest of Merravid, The Hobbit
Danny Dinneen, 12 Bishopscourt Way, Wilton, Cork, Republic of Ireland

Red Moon, Emerald Isle, Worm in Paradise, Hulk, Hobbit, Upper Gumtree, Hacker, Grand Larceny, Merry Christmas from Melbourne House, Robin of Sherwood, Snowqueen, Kentilla, Gremlins, Eureka, Terrormolinos, Lords of Time, Pirate Adventure, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings
Jason Jennings, 102 Berkely Road, Shirley, Solihull, Birmingham, West Midlands B90 2HU

Ultima IV, Zork II, Suspended, Pirate Adventure, Voodoo Castle, Critical Mass, Wizard and the Princess, Mission Asteroid, Mummy's Curse, Mission Impossible, Robin of Sherwood, Masquerade
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8EB

Hampstead, Sherlock, Bored of the Rings, Boggit, Fantastic Four, Lord of the Rings, Terrormolinos, Castle of Terror, Mordens Quest, Zzzzz . . . , Heroes of Karn, Twin Kingdom Valley
David Sutherland, 54 Wendover Road, Eltham, London SE9 6PB or 01 319 3395 after 6pm

Zork I, II, III, Adventureland, Dangermouse in BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple of Vran, Mask of the Sun, Lords of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade of Blackpoole, Seastalker, HitchHikers, Ultima III, Search for King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder on the Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings, Starcross, SubSunk, Worm in Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, Wizard of Akyrz, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Never-ending Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus and Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored of the Rings, Empire of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Quest for Holy Grail, Kentilla . . . (More next issue!)
Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia

Hulk, Spiderman, Voodoo Castle, Hobbit, Pirate Adventure, Merry Christmas, Robin of Sherwood, Price of Magik, Lord of the Rings
Nigel Leather, 45 Moreton Street, Winnington, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4DH Tel: 0606 781028

The Golden Baton, Worm in Paradise, Hobbit, Fourth Protocol (Pt 3 only)
Andrew Blackman, 133 Ashen Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3LY Tel: 0322 76887 5.30-8.30pm

Dungeon Adventure, Lord of the Rings, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet of Death
David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri

Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Zork III, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story, Heroes of Karn, Mission 1, Gremlins, Robin of Sherwood
Ron McKenzie, 3 Silverstream, Freystrop, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 2SN

Adventureland, SubSunk, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Munroe Manor, Hacker, Classic Adventure, All early Infocom titles . . .
Chris Fleming, 235 Meola Road, Pt Chev, Auckland, N Zealand, Tel: 867074

Leather Goddesses, Ballyhoo, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, Wishbringer, HitchHikers, Seastalker, Questprobe III, Hulk, Spiderman, Exodus Ultima III, Ultima IV, Return to Eden, Worm in Paradise, Red Moon, Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Heroes of Karn, Perseus and Andromeda, Nine Princes in Amber, Gremlins
Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA Tel: (0227) 274846

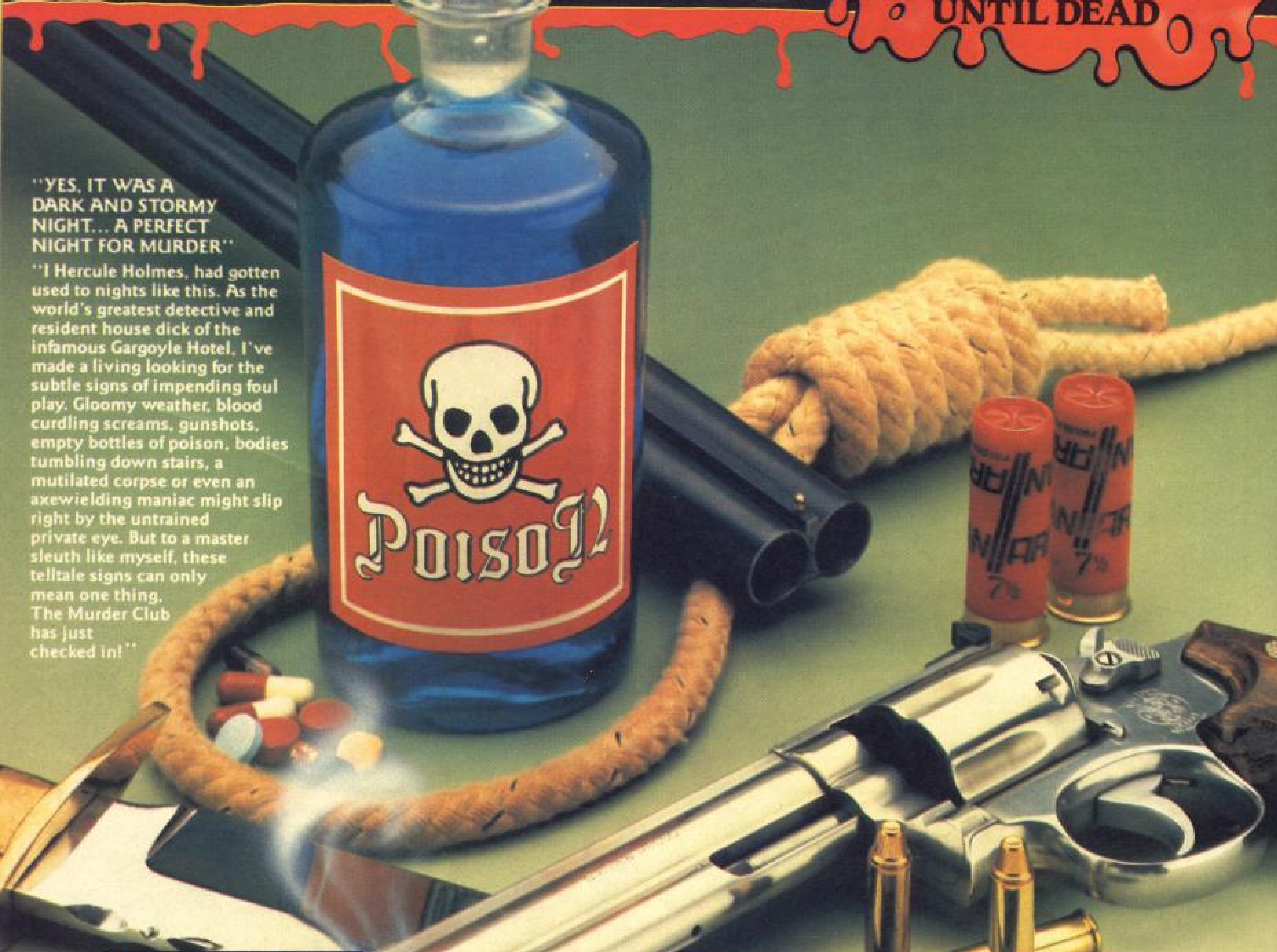
Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, Zim Sala bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland Tel: 036565 594



You are invited to join the Murder Club, but be careful you could end up. KILLED UNTIL DEAD

"YES, IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT... A PERFECT NIGHT FOR MURDER"

"I Hercule Holmes, had gotten used to nights like this. As the world's greatest detective and resident house dick of the infamous Gargoyle Hotel, I've made a living looking for the subtle signs of impending foul play. Gloomy weather, blood curdling screams, gunshots, empty bottles of poison, bodies tumbling down stairs, a mutilated corpse or even an axewielding maniac might slip right by the untrained private eye. But to a master sleuth like myself, these telltale signs can only mean one thing. The Murder Club has just checked in!"



"The Murder Club?' Yes, the Murder Club! Five of the world's bestselling murder mystery writers who transpose their fictional pulp plots into real-life murder and mayhem. Once again they have convened for their annual reunion here at the Gargoyle Hotel. And once again the dark, damp halls will echo with the cries of 'Don't shoot!', 'I've been poisoned!', 'Who stabbed me?', 'I've been shortsheeted!', and 'Who took all the hot water?' Yes, with the Murder Club as tonight's guests, more than the plumbing will be amiss!"

"Each member of The Murder Club will try to bump off the others and lay down claim to the crown of 'World's Greatest Murderer'. But it will not be a piece of quiche! For these brilliant criminal minds must match wits with moi, Hercule Holmes! I have only until midnight to discover the would-be murderer, victim, murder weapon and the scene of the crime."

"At my disposal will be every imaginable piece of high tech crimestopping gadgetry known to sleuthdom: minicameras, hidden bugs, even wire taps. Yet all these modern electronic wonders cannot replace my inherent ability as a born detective... instincts passed from generation to generation in the Holmes family.

Therefore, I accept the challenge. I will uphold the family honour! Before this night is over I will prevent a murder or be murdered trying! If I fail, one of the illustrious members of the Murder Club will surely be killed... yes Killed Until Dead!"

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ZZAP! COMP



Design An Original Computer Game for STREETWISE And You Could Win £500!

It's a hard life being a Comps Minion inside the Towers, sorting out all your competition entries, opening envelopes, judging comps and sending out prizes to people. I get really tired sometimes. Like now – I'm sitting in the broom cupboard, surrounded by piles of mail, absolutely exhausted. I need a holiday. Trouble is, I haven't got the money to jet off to somewhere sunny – by the time my meagre wage packet has been attacked by Mummy Minion who wants me to pay for my keep, I've barely enough money left over to pay for a large bag of Granny Grunge's famous Ludlow Pastilles to see me through the week. Saving up for a holiday is out of the question.

What I could do with is a nice little earner, like the one that a certain CRASH reader came up with. Trouble is, I haven't got the imagination to follow in the footsteps – nay, strides of Jonathan Eggelton. Jonathan was the winner of the **GENESIS – Birth of a Game** competition run in conjunction with DOMARK many months back. Jonathan's winning entry for the GENESIS comp was KAT TRAP, a game which is soon to be released by DOMARK on the STREETWISE label. And very well it went too, making the talented youngster more than a few well-earned pounds. He's currently designing another game or two for DOMARK – and he's still at school!

It's all very Nice 'n' Simple if you've got an imagination – all you have to do is design an *original* computer game. It can be based on any subject – from sex to shopping to exploring the depths of uncharted seas . . . I shall say no more, lest I inspire too much . . .

You can go into as much detail as you feel necessary – but don't bother doing any programming – written (or drawn) designs are what we want to see. Entries must arrive at **DESIGNER GAME, ZZAP! Towers, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** no later than 8th June 1987. The entry with the most potential – in the eyes of our expert panel of judges – earns the sender £500 in cash, PLUS all the fame and fortune associated with being a STREETWISE games designer. Oh, and by the way. Ten runners up will get a STREETWISE game of their choice – and don't worry, if you don't win outright and STREETWISE want to use your design for a game they'll respect your copyright and talk money . . .

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

PasT BlasteR

US Gold/Epyx, £4.95 cass (see offer), joystick only

First released way back in 1983, *Impossible Mission* hurls the player into a world of espionage, deadly robots, nuclear blackmail and a warped madman.

The plot concerns Elvin, a one-time college student whose mind was warped after a freak accident with a video game. Eventually becoming a Professor of computing and robotics, he suddenly disappeared and remained unheard of . . . until now.

Security breaches into key military computers have been traced to an underground silo, where Elvin and his enormous super-computer are thought to reside. Military experts reckon that Elvin

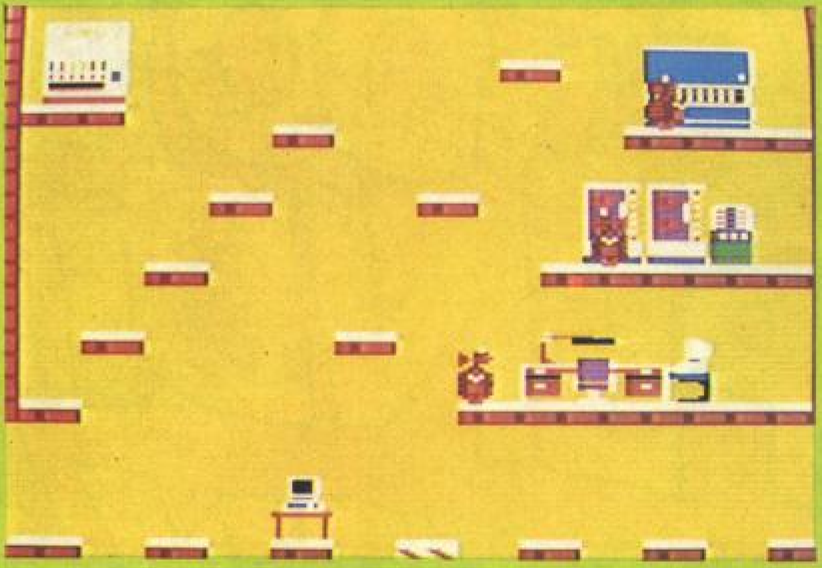


This was one of the first games I bought as a Commodore owner, and it's just as playable now as it was then. The first thing to grab me was the animation: it's still superb – you'll recognise the style if you have seen any of the Epyx sport simulations. The speech is also incredibly good, with five different sections, including a blood-curdling scream when your agent falls to his death. There are loads of rooms to explore, and the puzzle section is very entertaining in its own right. The program reeks of professionalism and is damn near flawless. Someday, all games will be made this way.

is capable of cracking the secret US missile launch codes in six hours time, giving him the ability to destroy the entire world. The only way the situation can be reversed is if a single person enters Elvin's



I haven't enjoyed myself so much in ages – it just goes to show how far ahead of its time this was. The graphics and sound are still state of the art – they're so much more than cosmetic, as both aspects create an exceptional atmosphere. Everything about Impossible Mission **is exquisite. Epyx should seriously consider a sequel – although to be fair, they'd have trouble topping this classic creation. If you missed** Impossible Mission **the first time around, don't miss the chance now.**



△ Aaaaaaargh! Ten precious minutes wasted by falling through a hole in the floor – hardly surprising, as this is one of the trickiest rooms to negotiate

silo and shuts down the computer, and there's only one person capable of completing this task, you – Special Agent 4125. No weapons can be taken on the mission, as Elvin's security scanners would spot them a mile off – the only thing

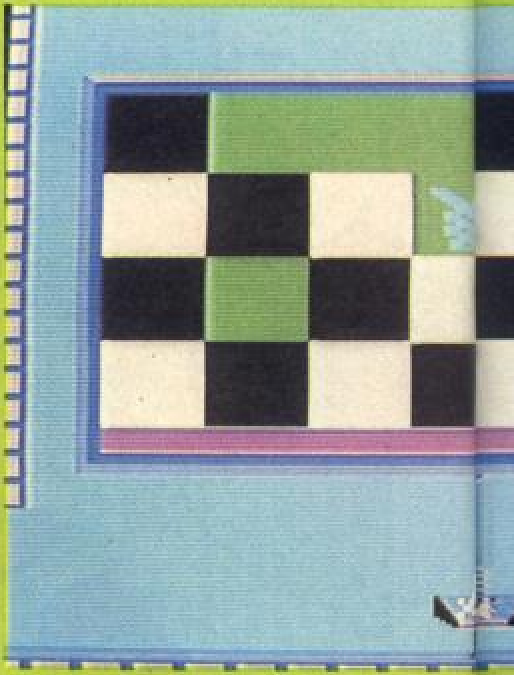


You're looking at one of the greatest programs ever written. The graphics, animation, sound, speech and gameplay combine perfectly to create a fabulous atmosphere – the feeling of 'being there' is complete. The different robot characteristics are brilliant – sometimes a seemingly stupid one turns around and gives chase at high speed, and at other times you spend ages creeping up behind one, just to find it's completely dead. There is an amazing amount of detail to be found in the furniture – right down to the toilet roll next to the lavatory and the microwave on the kitchen unit. It's brilliant playing this again, and it just goes to show that they really don't make 'em like they used to.

that can be smuggled through is a pocket computer . . .

The screen is split in two, with the upper section containing a side-on view of the ensuing action, and the pocket-computer control panel occupying the bottom third.

The mission begins at the lift-shaft which leads to Elvin's lair. Pulling on the joystick causes the lift to speed downwards, automatically stopping at the first floor it reaches. Agent 4125 can then turn either left or right to enter a room, with either choice revealing a series of gantries and catwalks interconnected by lifts. The catwalks contain pieces of furniture and machinery, some of which conceal passwords to the secret files contained in Elvin's central computer. Furniture can be searched by standing in front of it and pushing up on the joystick. As

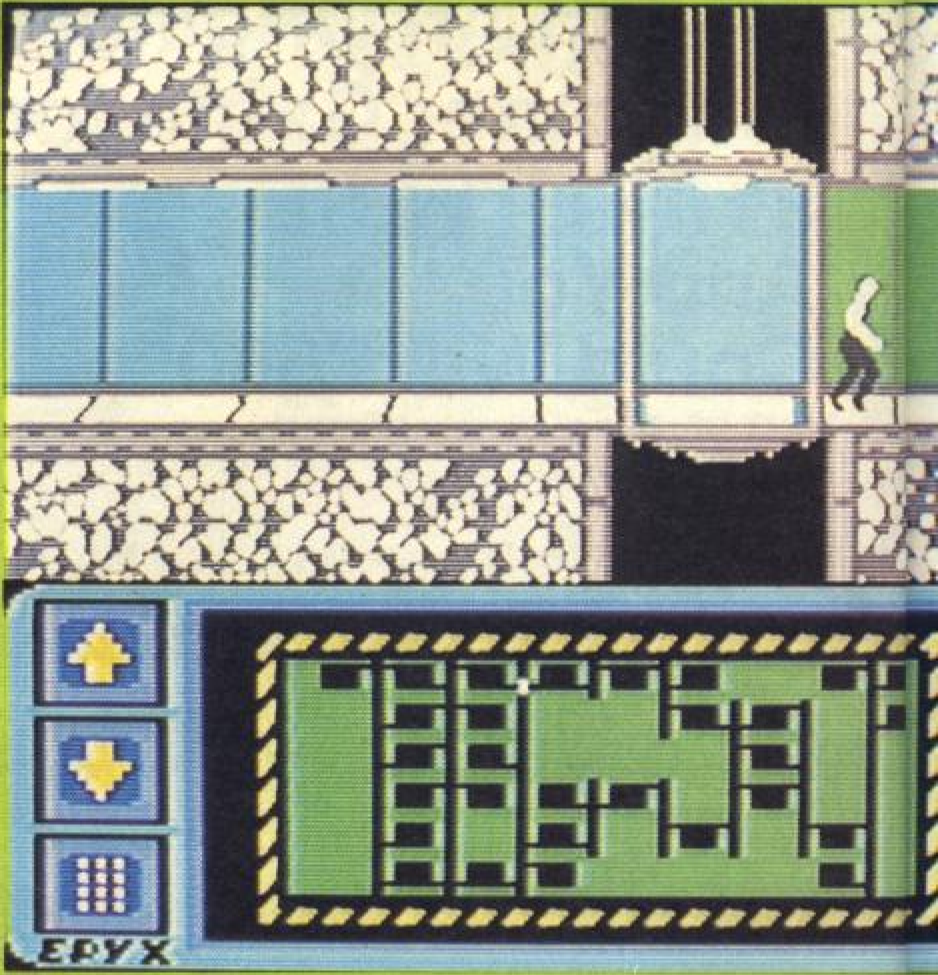


△ Agent 4125 adopts a ballet dancer pose in one of the many corridors found in Elvin's lair

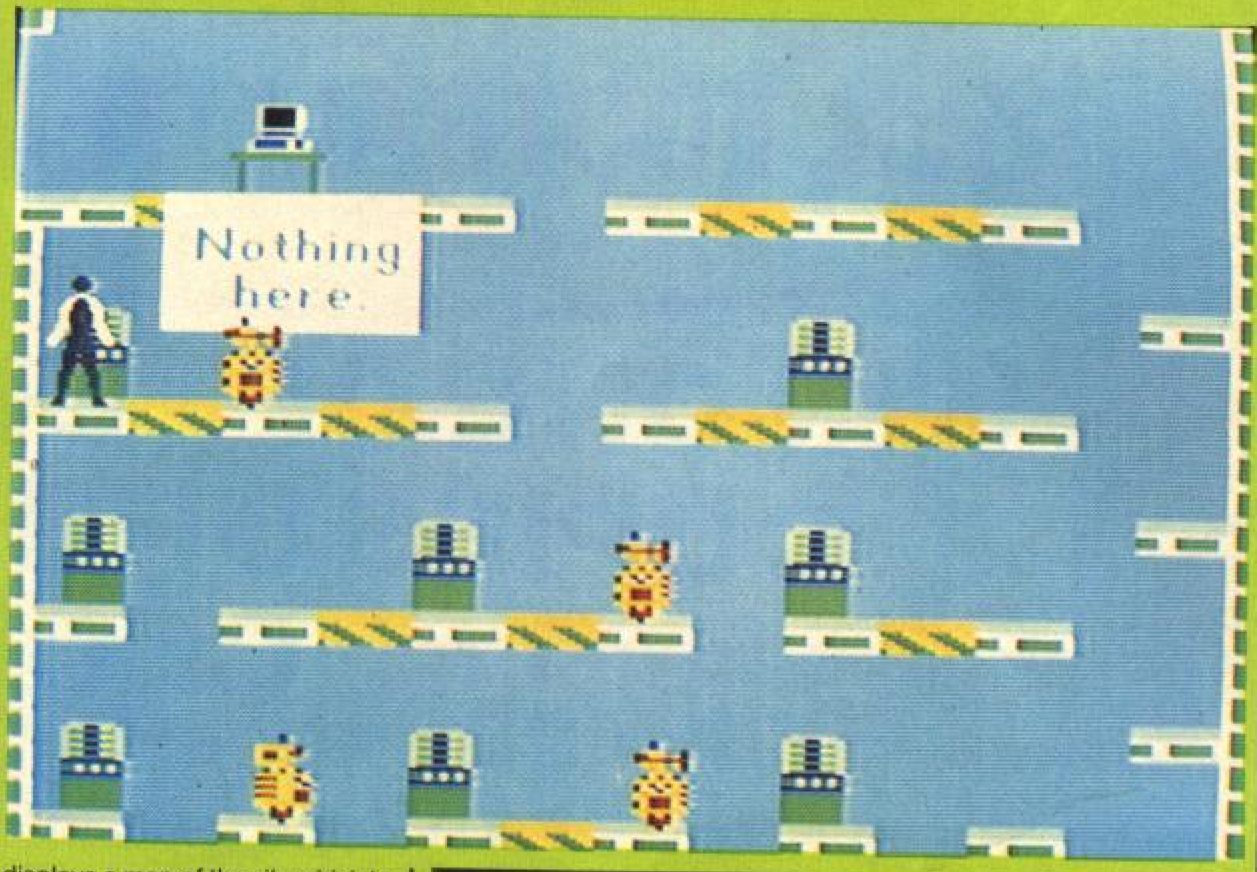
the Agent searches, a box appears containing a shrinking horizontal bar. A discovered password is displayed when the bar reaches zero – otherwise the words 'Nothing Here' appear.

Robots of varying intelligence patrol the catwalks – some remain motionless until disturbed, some wander around on a preset course, and others engage in relentless pursuit. Agent 4125 is stunned by

▽ Inside a Code Room: Agent 4125 has to replay the eight notes in ascending pitch in order to obtain a Robot Snooze Password



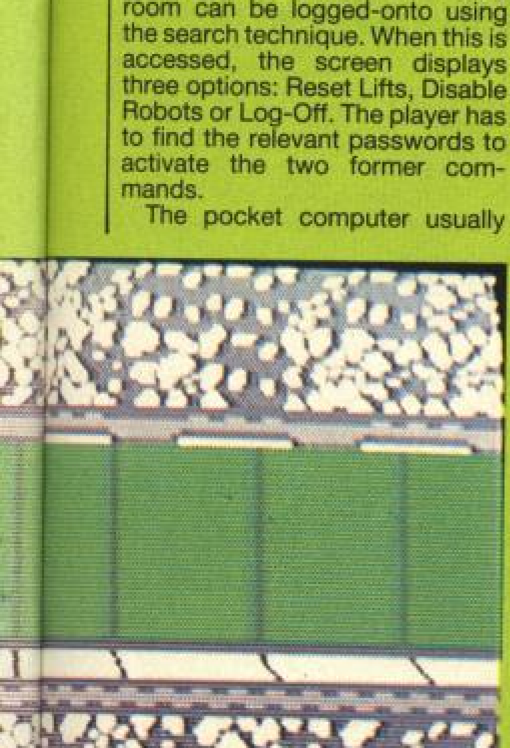




contact with a robot or its deadly electrical discharge, and ten minutes of mission time are wasted as he recovers from the shock. Bubble-like robots track every move made by the hero, and some rooms contain dangerous holes in the floor – once again, ten minutes are wasted if 4125 falls foul of these hazards.

One computer terminal in every room can be logged-onto using the search technique. When this is accessed, the screen displays three options: Reset Lifts, Disable Robots or Log-Off. The player has to find the relevant passwords to activate the two former commands.

The pocket computer usually displays a map of the silo which is built up as its rooms are explored. However, standing in a corridor and pressing the fire button changes the display to that of the game timer, activating a password assembly area in the process. The timer reads 12 o'clock at the start of the mission and immediately begins to tick towards six, the time when Elvin will launch the missiles. The passwords are displayed in a memory window and can be picked up and assembled in the centre of the control panel. When all the passwords have been assembled, the control room can be stormed and the computer shut down. Fail to do this, and Elvin will wreak his bitter revenge . . .



PRESENTATION 95%
Amusing scenario, detailed instructions, and outstanding in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 92%
Not overly varied, but amazing attention to detail and effective use of colour.

SOUND 97%
Brilliant, atmospheric spot FX and speech.

HOOKABILITY 97%
Instantaneous addiction.

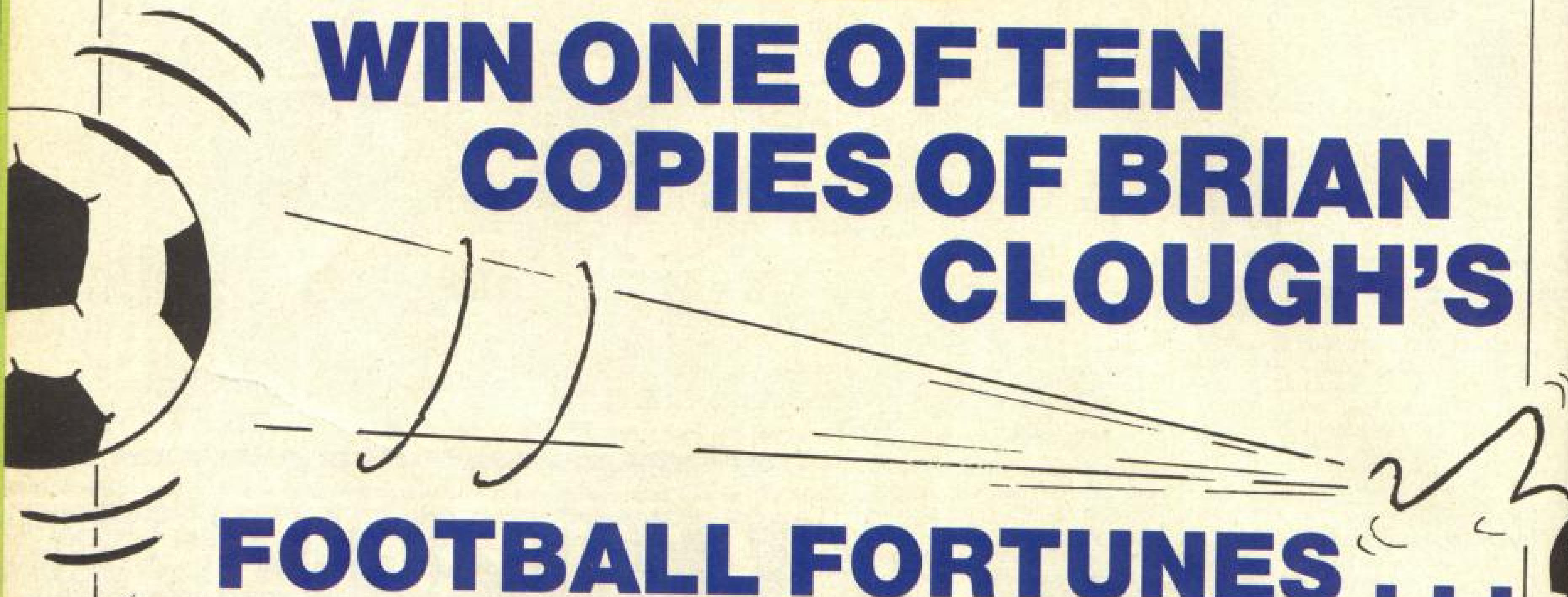
LASTABILITY 94%
High lasting appeal – 32 rooms to explore, and 36 pieces of puzzle to find and solve. Always worth another look.

VALUE 98%
A steal at half the price . . .

OVERALL 95%
A timeless classic which has lost very little since its release nearly three years ago.

PLAY BALL AND MANAGE YOUR OWN FOOTBALL TEAM!

WIN ONE OF TEN COPIES OF BRIAN CLOUGH'S



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Y	D	O	T	O	Y	Y	A	A	U	N	W	N	I
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L	S	L	W	O	T	C	N	O	T	U	L	I	T

NAME ....

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POST CODE ....

If there's one thing a Comps Minion likes least, it's Football – a nasty, horrid, muddy sport played by Rough People who shout and kick each other. So when Girlie Ed Penn told me that I'd have a computer-aided football board game to play with I was Rather Pleased. No mud or violence . . . just a nice relaxing game to play on a Sunday afternoon.

Come Sunday, I sat down with the rest of the ZZAP! lads to play CDS's BRIAN CLOUGH'S FOOTBALL FORTUNES . . . and discovered that the only thing left out was the mud! Screaming and shouting and kicking each other is all part and parcel of this game – well, it is when you play with ZZAP!'s trio of uncouth youths . . . And that's not mentioning all the horrible wheeling and double dealing too . . . I wish I was like the computer and could dictate the action from afar.

Anyway, thanks to CDS I've got ten copies of BRIAN CLOUGH'S FOOTBALL FORTUNES to give away – I've also got ten footballs, so you can go off to your local park and let off some steam. All you've got to do is find the ten top football teams hidden in the wordsquare. When you've found all ten, send your entry to **ZZAP! FOOTBALL FORTUNES, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** and make sure it arrives before the 8th of May.

"Off you go, off you go, off you go . . . "

ZZAP! COMP

. . . AND ONE OF TEN FOOTBALLS TO BOOT!


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An amazing trilogy of action and adventure that follows your exploits as Galactic Commando in your struggle against the power hungry leaders of the Bungeling Empire and the search for their hidden treasure.
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ZAP! COMP


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FIFTY RUNNERS-UP PRIZES MASTERTRONIC'S MILK RACE GAME!

OULD ASK FOR!

WIN! A DAY OUT AT THE MILK RACE!

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MEET THE WORLD'S TOP CYCLISTS!

BULOUS SPECTRA G BIKE!



As a Comps Minion I have to be exceedingly fit – what with all the running up and down the long, winding stairs of ZZAP! towers with enormous bags full of competition entries, and staggering around with huge prizes. There's also the long hourly run to the sarnie shop and back for the ZZAP! team's food . . . Phew! What I really need to keep my muscles trim is something like the Dawes Spectra racing bike that's on offer here.

Look at it – a dream machine built for fast cycling and impressing the pedestrians. Featuring a handbuilt 73 degree race geometry frame with Reynolds 500 CrMo main tubes (and they're light), 12 speed alloy transmission, alloy side-pull brakes and chainset and 700c quick release wheels, it moves as sleekly as it looks!

However, a bike is only as good as its rider, so what better way to pick up hints and tips on getting the best out of your bike than going for a day out at the Milk Race. There you'll be able to meet and talk to the cycling stars. But that's not all – you can have a copy of any cyclist's unique official jersey, be it British, French, Italian – whatever. To cap it all there's a copy of Mastertronic's official Milk Race game – so you can still cycle if the weather outside won't let you.

AND, there are 50 consolation prizes of a copy of the game on offer. All you have to do is correctly answer the five following Milk Race-based questions . . .

1. How many miles long was last year's Milk Race?

A) 1,147
B) 1,065
C) 1,102

2. Over how many stages was last year's race run?

A) 16
B) 15
C) 14

3. What was the average speed of last year's winner?

A) 26.22 mph
B) 31.78 mph
C) 52.94 mph

4. Who won the race last year?

A) Joey McLoughlin
B) James McLoughlin
C) John Mcloughlin

5. Which TEAM won last year's race?

A) AMX-Halford
B) ANC-Halford
C) BND-Raleigh

Put what you think are the correct answers AND your name and address on a postcard and send it to **ON YER BIKE ZZAP!, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** – and make sure that your entry arrives before the 9th of May.

ZZAP! READERS' CH

GAMES TOP 30

1 *(1)* **WORLD GAMES** *(15%)*
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 98%

2 *(2)* **LEADER BOARD** *(9%)*
US Gold/Access, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

3 *(8)* **GAUNTLET** *(9%)*
US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

4 *(4)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS** *(6%)*
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

5 *(5)* **SUPER CYCLE** *(5%)*
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

6 *(3)* **GREEN BERET** *(3%)*
Imagine, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

7 *(9)* **SANXION** *(3%)*
Thalamus, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

8 *(7)* **URIDIUM** *(3%)*
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

9 *(16)* **THE SENTINEL** *(3%)*
Firebird, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: N/A

10 *(13)* **THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTIRIAD** *(2%)*
Palace Software, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

11 *(29)* **AVENGER**
Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 86%

12 *(10)* **PARALLAX**
Ocean, £8.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

13 *(11)* **ALLEYKAT**
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 89%

14 *(24)* **FLASH GORDON**
Mastertronic, £2.99 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 89%

15 *(20)* **INFILTRATOR**
US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 91%

16 *(6)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE**
System 3, £6.50 cass, £10.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 91%

17 *(19)* **SUMMER GAMES II**
US Gold/Epyx, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 97%

18 *(12)* **DAN DARE**
Virgin, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

19 *(22)* **ELITE**
Firebird, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

20*(21)* **MERCENARY**
Novagen, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 98%

21 *(28)* **IRIDIS ALPHA**
Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 95%

22 *(-)* **PAPERBOY**
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 44%

23 *(-)* **PARK PATROL**
Firebird, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

24 *(17)* **WINTER GAMES**
US Gold/Epyx, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 94%

25 *(14)* **DRUID**
Firebird, £7.95 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 88%

26 *(27)* **ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE**
Software Projects, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 90%

27 *(-)* **GUNSHIP**
Microprose, £14.99 cass, £19.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 93%

28 *(-)* **CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING**
US Gold/Epyx, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 80%

29 *(-)* **180**
Mastertronic, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 70%

30 *(25)* **FIST II**
Melbourne House, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! Overall Rating: 39%



HARTS

MAY 1987

MUSIC TOP 10

1 *(1)* **SANXION** *(25%)*
Thalamus
Loading Music (Rob Hubbard)

2 *(4)* **KNUCKLEBUSTERS** *(10%)*
Melbourne House
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

3 *(2)* **MIAMI VICE** *(9%)*
Ocean
'Title Screen' Music (Martin Galway)

4 *(6)* **PARALLAX** *(6%)*
Ocean
Title Screen Music (Martin Galway)

5 *(-)* **GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS** *(5%)*
Elite
Main Theme (Mark Cooksey)

6 *(-)* **THRUST** *(4%)*
Firebird
Firebird (Rob Hubbard)

7 *(3)* **LIGHTFORCE** *(3%)*
FTL
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

8 *(5)* **FLASH GORDON** *(3%)*
Mastertronic
Title Screen Music (Rob Hubbard)

9 *(7)* **GREEN BERET** *(3%)*
Imagine
Loading Music (Martin Galway)

10 *(-)* **WARHAWK** *(3%)*
Firebird
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

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WINNER (£40 worth of software plus ZZAP! T-Shirt): **Peter Hughes**, Kington HR5 3UA
RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap): **Richard Wotherspoon**, Ayrshire KA11 4EU; **Howard Fawcett**, Doncaster DN5 9LY; **Mick Kelly**, Mickleover DE3 5HX; **Lee Stanton**, Banbury OX15 4NT



ZZAP! 64
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MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFT WARE

ZZAP! 64

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All you have to do is tell us, in no more than TWENTY WORDS, why you think YOU should appear on the cover of ZZAP! 64. The person who provides what we think is the most amusing or logical answer will win the envy of tens of thousands and become a cover star. Send your entry to **I'M FIT FOR THE COVER!, ZZAP! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** to arrive before the 8th of May.

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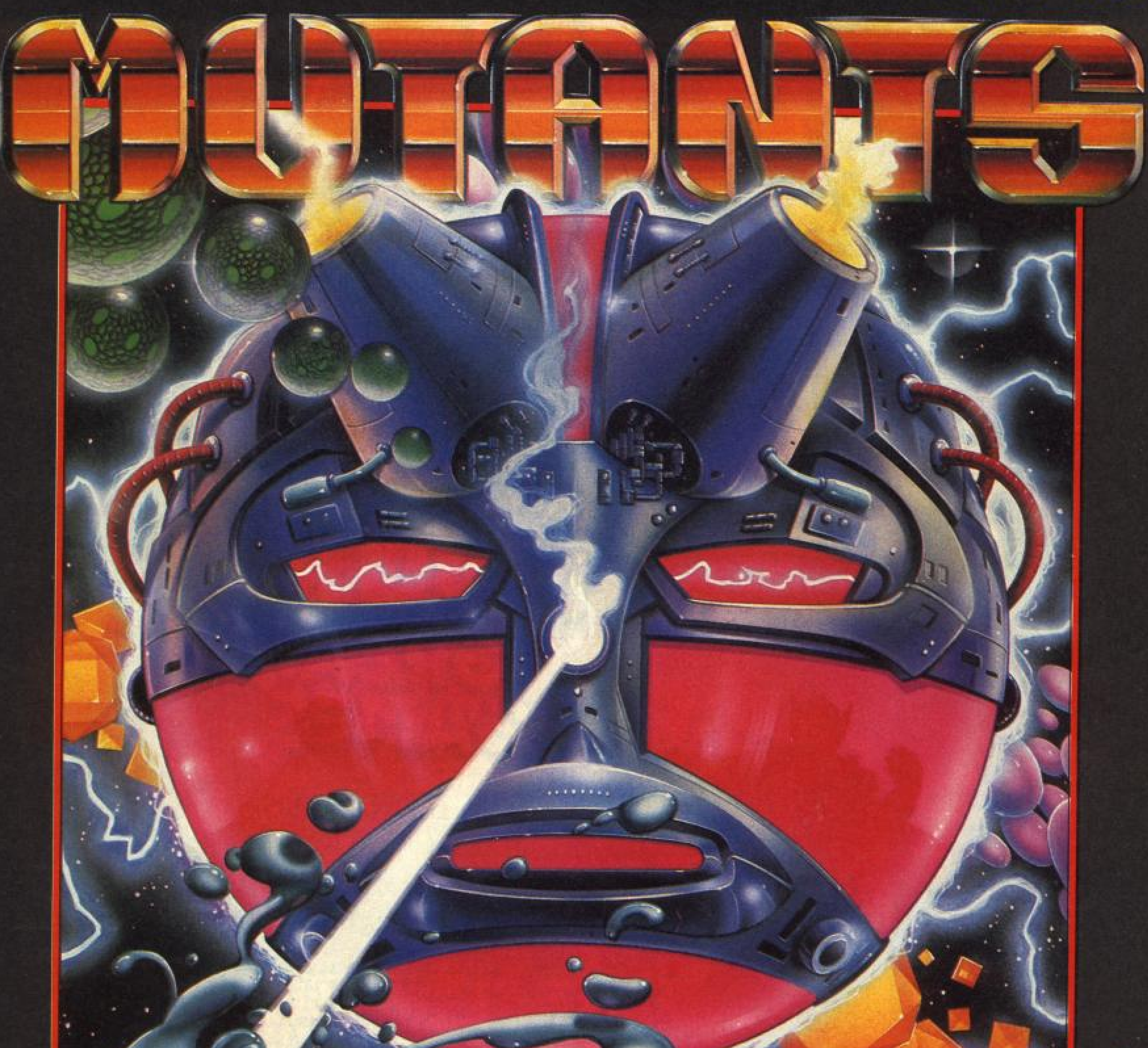
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EVESHAM MICROS IN MERCY DASH!

ZZAP! Readers Rescued!

The people at Evesham Micros quickly came to the rescue when they heard that a trio of ZZAP! readers had lost money because Micro-Mail/Celcom Systems of Manchester had ceased trading.

Mrs S Grumbridge of Aylesbury, **Mrs L O'Neill** of Romford and a **Mrs Charlesworth** from Huddersfield wrote to us on behalf of their sons, pointing out that they'd sent money off to Micro-Mail/Celcom in response to an advertisement carried in ZZAP! They never received the goods, and any letters of enquiry were met with a wall of silence. Eventually, it became clear that Micro Mail/Celcom was no more, and that our three readers stood little chance of getting any recompense. Newsfield's Advertising Manager, Roger Bennett, explained the predicament of the glum trio to the bossman at Evesham Micros, who immediately agreed to help out.

Now the three despondent lads have been cheered up as a result of Evesham Micros' generosity – they've each been sent a new slimline disk drive worth £150, together with a Slimline 64 replacement case, as pictured here.

Apparently, the Official Receiver is dealing with claims against Micro-Mail and Celcom, and he's the man to deal with if you feel you've been ripped off – Evesham Micros only helped out this once. But at least the story has a happy ending for three people who wrote to us . . .

RHYTHMIC BEATINGS OF FIREBIRD'S JUNGLE DRUMS

Firebird are going to make a lot of people happy with news of their impending release of extra soundsets for *Microrhythm*, their wonder budget drum synthesiser.

It's planned to include four different soundsets on the cassette, possibly including musical instruments, animal noises and human voices. We've already heard the voices, and they sound pretty neat!

Another up-and-coming Firebird release is *Revs II*, a racing simulation featuring either five or six tracks, and including a computer-aided control method, enabling any joystick or keyboard to guide the car around the courses.

Still with Firebird, a prestigious deal will see the release of previous Activision classics on their budget label. Games to be included in the range are *Hero*, *Zenji*, *Pitfall II*, *Toy Bizarre*, and *Decathalon*. Other possibilities include Electric Dreams' *RMS Titanic*, and the as yet unreleased (in this country) *Future Ball* and *Pyramids of Time*. Should be enough there to satisfy even the most ravenous of software appetites.

Rumours and speculation still surround the current development of *Sentinel II* – "don't dismiss the idea just yet . . . " is the latest vibe.

TORQUEMADA MEETS HIS NEMESIS

In this, the third binary incarnation of a 2000 A D character (**Strontium Dog** and **Judge Dredd** being the previous subjects), Nemesis the Warlock attempts to seek out his old adversary Torquemada, in a bid to rid the Universe of him once and for all.

Armed with his trusty sword 'Excessus' and a laser pistol, Nemesis must run the gauntlet of the dreaded Terminators (old Torky's religious followers, and defenders of the evil Empire of Termight). A digitised picture of Torquemada's hideous countenance appears as Nemesis enters each new screen. This signifies the evil leader's influence over his troops, and as more of his face appears, the dead Terminators begin to reanimate. Soon, Nemesis finds himself battling both the living and the undead! As the death count increases, so too do the bodies – careful positioning of which also plays an important part of escaping from certain screens, as climbing a stack of corpses allows Nemesis to reach exits above head height!

As Nemesis reaches the end of his quest, Torquemada's face appears more rapidly, the action then becomes hectic to say the least. Eventually, Torquemada himself is reached, and the fate of the free Universe lies in your hands alone – be pure, be vigilant, behave – until the end of April, when Martech reckon the program will be finished.

BIG, MEATY AND CRUDE

Barbarian is the title of a new fantasy fighting game from the same programming team that brought you *Cauldron II*.

Designed by Steve Brown, *Barbarian* is loaded in two parts, the first being a one or two player head-to-head duel with swords. In this section the onus is on perfecting your skills as a swordsman. There are 16 different moves to master, and a wide variety of computer controlled opponents to dispose of. The results of combat are promised to be shown in nothing less then graphic detail . . . Oo-er!

The second section is for a single player only, and enables you to use your newly acquired sword skills to rescue a Princess from the clutches of Drax, an evil Sorcerer. Both sections take place over two different backdrops, and programmer Stanley Schmebri claims that *Barbarian* is one of the goriest games ever – all for £9.99 on cassette!



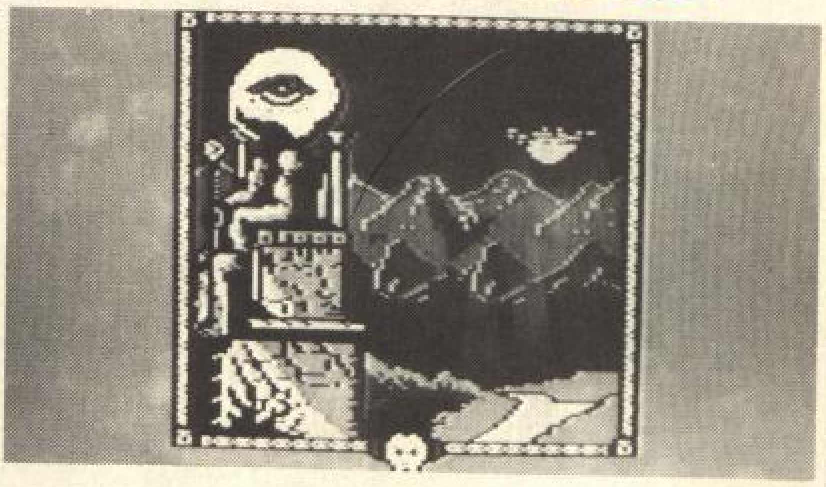
FABULOUS FANTASY TRIPS FROM MELBOURNE HOUSE

Fantasy and wizardry feature heavily in two new adventure releases from Melbourne House: *Wiz*, the long awaited sequel to *The Hobbit*, and the second in the *Lord of the Rings* series, *The Shadows of Mordor*.

Wiz comprises elements of strategy, trading and magic, as you undertake a magical quest to the mysterious domain of Midgard and Niflheim – a land full of Elves, Demons, Wizards, Necromancers and other fantastic creatures. Starting out as a Level One Wizard's Apprentice, you have to become stronger and stronger until the status of Fifth Level King Wizard is reached. The task is achieved by finding incantations which are used to fill your initially empty spell book.

Based on J R R Tolkien's 'The Two Towers', *Shadows of Mordor* transports you to Middle Earth where you can live out your fantasies with the likes of Hobbits, Elves and Wizards. Apparently, the formula of *Lord of the Rings* is taken and improved upon, and includes a superior parser which can recognise intelligent sentences up to 128 characters long, and commands a vocabulary of over 800 words.

Both releases should be in your local shop by June, sporting a sticky label with £9.95 written on it.



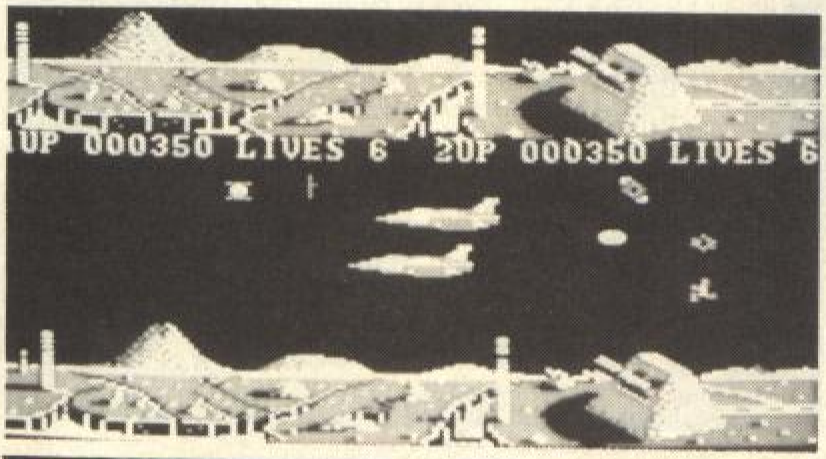
HEWSON TWOSOME

Hewson continue their tradition of being a positive hive of industry, announcing two brand new original titles, *Eagles*, and *Zynaps*.

The former is a one or two player, horizontally scrolling split-screen shoot 'em up (phew!). The action is set over eight different levels of the planet Zinox, where androids have to be picked up from the planet surface and dropped off at strategic points. Keeping the action fast and furious are enormous squadrons of violent alien craft to dodge and destroy. There's also a between screen bonus game, giving the player a few seconds respite.

The second title, *Zynaps*, is the creation of Dominic Robinson, the programmer who achieved the impossible by faithfully converting *Uridium* to the Spectrum. It's another horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, promising plenty of deep space action. This time the player has to battle through a series of alien space stations, asteroid fields and planets, before entering into the 'final conflict' stage. Sounds interesting.

Both games have a provisional June release date, and share an £8.95 price tag – more news when we have it.



FLAUNTING FUNKY FLUNKY

Piranha have announced details of Don *Trapdoor* Priestly's latest project – *Flunky*. Featuring the same sort of large, cuddly sprites that were used in *Trapdoor*, the objective is to guide Flunky around the cellars of Buckingham Palace. The head of the household (and country) gives you different tasks which have to be carried out – usually with amusing results.

It'll be a whole Summer before anything is seen – Piranha have stated a September release date for the product.

TAI PAN – THE CHINESE CONNECTION

Quite appropriately, Ocean take to the high seas with *Tai Pan*, a trading adventure set around the South China Seas.

Starting with a limited amount of money, and attended by one follower, your aim is to amass wealth and status by becoming a privateer and trading your wares from port to port.

All aspects of this operation are covered, from purchase of a suitable ship to press-ganging a crew – and even visiting the local house of (ahem) ill repute.

The cassette version is to be a single load, and while following the general gameplay as the disk version, it won't have as much detail.

Both editions will be available soon, and initial reports sound very promising. Stay tuned . . .

GADGETS GALORE?

Fans of the T V show *Inspector Gadget* will be pleased to hear that Melbourne House's officially licensed game is almost upon us. *Inspector Gadget and the Circus of Fear* features the gangly cartoon hero, and has over 38 levels of play, set over five, separately loaded worlds.

On each level the Inspector has to enter the circus and defuse the bombs that have been planted by the agents of MAD. There are a variety of problems to be solved, and Gadget can get help by utilising a selection of handy devices which are found lying around – Gadget Skates, Gadget Legs and an Inflatable Gadget Coat to name but a few.

To make matters worse, the worlds are inhabited by all manner of creatures, intent on preventing our hero from completing his mission. Horaces, flying clocks, madmen and flytraps all conspire against him, plus one or two more!

The game is to be available by the end of April, and will set you back a tenner, with 5p change.



FIGHTING A SUBMARINE WAR

A few months ago we mentioned that Epyx were working on a new submarine simulator. Now more details have arrived . . .

Sub Battle Simulator turns the clock back to World War II, and gives the player the opportunity to captain one of six types of American submarines or German Kriegsmarine (U-Boat) through more than 60 missions, each based on a real historic scenario. These range from a relatively simple seek-and-destroy mission to the ultimate challenge – surviving all six years of the war.

It is said that simulator has been painstakingly programmed so that it's as realistic as possible, and separate navigation, weather, radar, target book and gun screens, as well as a 200,000 square mile map and full 360 degree vision would seem to back up this claim.

We'll scrutinise the product in two months time, when US Gold reckon the program will be finished.

GET YOUR VIDCOMS HERE

If you're having trouble in obtaining a copy of the *Vidcom* art utility, never fear. It's available from **The Power House, 9 Kings Yard, Carpenters Lane, London** – price £4.95 on cassette.

NO BULL, IT'S GOT TO BE BULLDOG

The launch of Mastertronic's new label, 'Bulldog' (best of British), sees the release of *Feud* and *Colony* for the 64. An instant hit on other machines, we'll have to wait and see how *Feud* fares on the Commodore – as yet, we've had no review copy!

MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN

The exploits of an Englishman abroad during the final days of the British Empire are lampooned in a project which combines the talents of Binary Vision and Palace Software. The former group are a new company, formed by Rupert Bowater and Paul Norris, the ex-Electronic Pencil Company programmers who designed and coded *Zoids* on the 64 and provided invaluable help with *The Fourth Protocol*.

Stifflip And Co is a completely icon-driven adventure which mimics the 'Ripping Yarn' stories of the comics and films seen in the twenties and thirties – a period when the Sun never set on the British Empire, and upper lips remained unflappable in the face of adversity. The program is divided into two separate and independently loaded sections, *Out for the Count* and *The Final Countdown*.

The story follows the adventures of Sebastian Stifflip and his trio of eccentric companions: Professor Braindeath, Colonel R G Bargie and Miss Palmyra Primbottom. This weird and wonderful quartet have volunteered to take on the evil Count Chameleon, and overthrow him before he can fully develop the Rubbertronic Ray – a deadly weapon which could loosen sexual morals and undermine the mighty British Empire.

The player dictates the actions of the four characters as they interact with one another, solving problems and attempting to accomplish the mission's objective. The action is displayed in a highly novel frame-by-frame series of comic pictures. Although this style has previously been used in *Redhawk*, the Binary Vision approach is far, far superior. As a character moves from one location to another, or completes an action, the lower frame rolls up the display to bring a fresh one into view. This is an example of one of many glorious graphic effects seen throughout. Other impressive visuals include a beautiful film-like dream sequence when the game pauses, and a superb page 'flip'. Sadly, stills do little justice, failing to convey the quality of the effects.

Events are dictated by use of six icons that sit on the left hand side of the screen. Utilising them, the player can talk with another character, fight, move from location to location, interact with an object, access a status screen or swap between characters (only one character is controlled at time).

Talking to characters (or objects) results in a series of speech bubbles appearing over the display, often with amusing results. The Interact icon causes a window to appear with a list of actions. Choosing an action results in another window opening, this time listing all objects and characters within the location. The character usually says something to indicate his/her thoughts on the player's decision, and a fresh picture appears on the display to show the result of any actions.

The fight sequence is very original. Throughout the mission Chameleon's minions track the intrepid foursome, ambushing when they see fit. Choose to stand and fight, and three windows open: one to measure your opponents punch, another containing crosshairs and a target, and finally your own character's punch-meter. Using the crosshairs to line up the shot, you aim for the centre of the target – this can be tricky, because the crosshairs move around randomly. The nearer the shot is to the centre of the target the stronger the punch. Meanwhile, your opponent is bashing away – thus, fast and consistent shooting is the key to success. You can always 'play chicken' and use the 'hit below the belt' option – but if it's used too many times there may be some sort of divine retribution . . .

Rupert and Paul have tried to capture the feel of the period, mainly by means of satire – which works admirably. There are constant jokes and jibes about the old English 'Raj' attitude – and some of the puns are REALLY awful. Sometimes this sort of humour has to be applied to solving the logical and less obscure problems.

It's difficult not to get enthused about *Stifflip And Co*, although the unusual blend of arcade and adventure won't appeal to all tastes. Palace reckon that the package should be complete within a few weeks, so there could well be a full review next issue. Keep the old peepers peeled, chaps!



△ Colonel R G Bargie (GNT and bar) about to move West – as indicated by the window at the top of the screen. Meanwhile, Professor Braindeath and Miss Palmyra Primbottom are incapacitated . . .



△ The fight sequence, in which Viscount Sebastian Stifflip indulges in a bout of fisticuffs with one of Count Chameleon's henchmen



△ The Good Colonel keeps strange company . . .



△ Paul Norris (left) and Rupert Bowater (right) – the brains behind STIFFLIP AND CO for Palace Software

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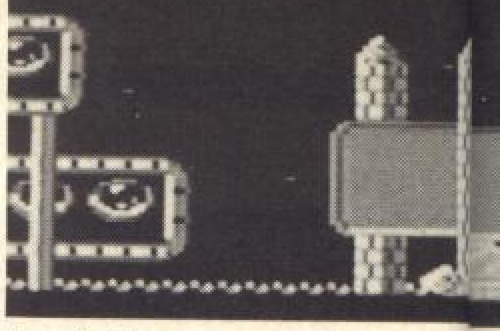
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ARMOURDILLO

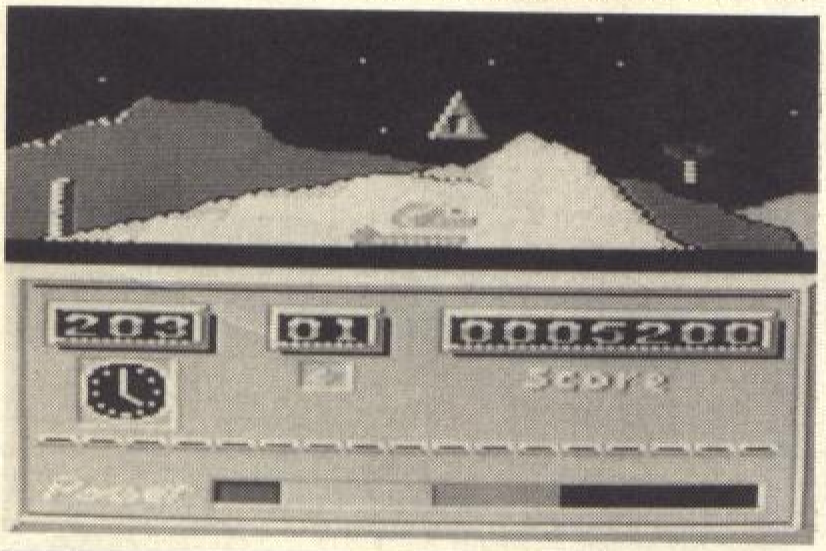
Code Masters, £1.99 cass, joystick only

The peaceful planet of Mobanti is under attack from the most violent and merciless of aliens – Earthlings! This revolting group of barbarians have decided to exterminate the Mobanti race, and since the Mobantis have no way of defending themselves, extinction seems to be just around the corner.

However, you, a heroic Mobantette, has decided to take action and transport as many Mobantis as possible to the safety of a bunker, deep below the planet surface where nothing could harm them. The only machine capable of making the journey is the *Armourdillo*, the only biological tank on Mobanti . . .

The action is viewed side-on, and played over a two-way horizontally scrolling backdrop. The objective is to travel as far left as possible and shoot down the force-field, allowing a survival pod filled with Mobanti people to pass through. When the pod lands, the Armourdillo picks it up and drags it to the right hand side of the landscape – it then automatically rolls into the bunker entrance. The Armourdillo can then be driven back to the force-field to collect another pod.

Throughout the ferrying, Earth craft fly in to attack. If one touches the Armourdillo energy is lost, represented by a bar which shrinks towards a fatal zero. The Armourdillo's armoury comprises an unlimited supply of lethal missiles, capable of destroying an attacking craft.





Why bother to produce something as limited as this? Can't somebody see when a game is mind-numbingly boring and monotonous? Yes, it sounds like youthful cynicism is once again putting in the proverbial boot, but it's not. Let's take a close look at this product. The objective is to shuttle left and right across a landscape, collecting and dropping off pods, while avoiding the occasional attacking alien craft. This wouldn't be too bad if the journey was treacherous and exciting, but it's not. The trip across the surface of the planet takes a few seconds and the opposition's leisurely pace fails to provide any excitement. There's no change in the action from level to level and the whole thing becomes boring after a couple of goes. The sound and graphics are professional, but completely wasted on this inept rubbish.



Armourdillo**'s objective is unimaginitive to say the least; get the pod, shoot the aliens, drop the pod, shoot the aliens, get the pod . . . stupidly simplistic and not at all addictive. The graphics and sound are good enough, and the programmer can obviously do his job, so why waste time producing this drivel?**

TERMINATOR

Power House, £1.99 cass, joystick only

Earth is under threat, and the only barrier between survival and extinction is you and your trio of customised alien-mashing space fighters. The enemy invasion force seems indestructible, but there is a large chink in the aliens's armour – 17 horizontally scrolling planets, whose destruction would scare the alien task force into submission . . .



Terminator **is heavily** Uridium **influenced in most aspects – except execution and playability. The attack waves lack variation, and the graphics are generally poor. The inherent bugs are also annoying: having just finished a screen, the planet should be destroyed – instead, the program it upon itself to destroy you!** Terminator **is simply no fun at all . . . and without that, what's the point?**





Turn back the clock! The ghost of Uridium **past returns to shake its rusty chains, and hoot and wail dismally. This is particularly poor variant on the tried and tired horizontally scrolling theme which looks as though it has only recently been exhumed from a peat grave. The juddery scrolling, amateurish graphics, glitching sprites, poor game design and naff bonus screen are combined brilliantly to produce a designer heap of rubbish. The scrolling is pathetically slow, and the ship's firepower is about as useful as a pea-shooter against Trident. The final insult is the 'special offer' on the inside of the inlay – it reads: "For a FREE Power House poster, just send 50p and an SAE to Alpha Omega." Very droll . . .**

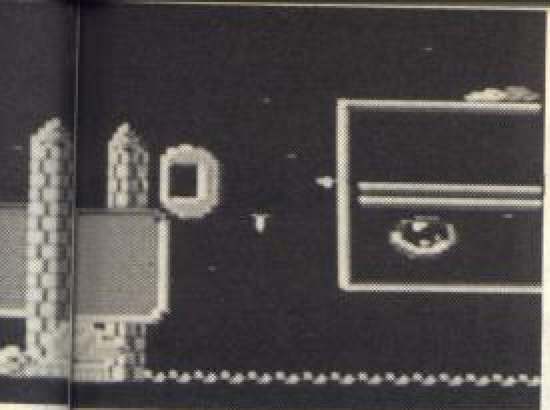


The action is viewed from the side, with squadrons of alien craft moving in from both sides of the screen. When enough alien attacks have been endured the planet changes colour, and the player has to make a second, identical attacking run. This time the planet gives up the ghost and blows up, allowing the player to partake in a bonus game.

The screen displays a horizontal row of numbers, representing bonus points. A light flashes along, and the player attempts to stop it at the highest number by pressing the fire button. Complete this action and the light switches to the



If only The Power House's games matched the standard of their artwork . . . Terminator **is desperately dull, and involves little skill – it appears to be a simple case of being in the right place at the right time. There is minimal graphic variation – what's there is reasonable but it rarely changes.** Terminator **has been done many times before, and has usually turned out better than this.**



When enough pods have been dumped into the bunker the action steps up a level, bringing new scenery and more vicious opposition into play.

PRESENTATION 78%
Music on/off option, and a very pretty title screen. Little else impresses.

GRAPHICS 78%
Colourful and detailed.

SOUND 67%
A short, but competent tune and decent FX.

HOOKABILITY 20%
A major advance in instantaneous boredom.

LASTABILITY 10%
Lacks action, excitement and variety.

VALUE 22%
Two quid's worth of pretty cosmetics.

OVERALL 14%
About as exciting as watching a pendulum swing, and just as addictive.



lower display, where it whizzes around a circle made up of two 'win' and two 'lose' icons – stopping on the 'win' icon gains the points.

PRESENTATION 57%
No options, a poor title screen and scrolling message. The game design is also flawed.

GRAPHICS 36%
Ineffective backdrops and sprites which judder and glitch when the scroll routine gets into gear.

SOUND 25%
An awful series of noises on the title screen try to pass off as a tune – and fail. The spot effects are poor, too.

HOOKABILITY 22%
Simple enough to pick up and play, but the frustrating game structure and slow speed drown any enjoyment.

LASTABILITY 14%
There's little to keep even the most masochistic shoot 'em up addicts enthralled.

VALUE 25%
Two quid isn't much these days . . . but to throw it away on this dross is a bit extravagant.

OVERALL 17%
A very simple, frustrating and unrewarding *Uridium* clone. Don't even consider looking at it.

LAZERWHEEL

Mastertronic, £2.99 cass, joystick or keys

Alien forces have invaded the eight sectors of the hyperspace causeway, planting bombs in their wake in an attempt to close this vital communications link. Your ship has been sent in to seek out the aliens, and blast them into oblivion.

The ship remains in the middle of the circular sector, covering the entire sector by rotating. Aliens and bombs spin around the sector walls, with a system of colour-codes distinguishing their different functions.

When shot, a purple block splits into two – one yellow, the other blue. These rotate around the sector in opposite directions, momentarily forming a green block as they cross. Shooting the green block delays the appearance of bombs in the sector, providing more time to deal with aliens already present. Shooting the blue or yellow blocks individually means that the remaining block must then be destroyed to facilitate the return of the original purple.

Light green blocks have to be hit three times, each blast causing them to change colour (first to cyan, then light blue) and alter direction. Successfully eliminating this block reduces the sector's damage by ten percent.

Flashing orange and brown blocks carry a bonus proportional to the time remaining on the clock, while flashing red, pink or white blocks are bombs which must be destroyed before they explode.

A grey block appears when a shot misses its target, and remains stationary on the sector wall – if hit again, it reflects the laser bolt back, destroying your ship. Bombs and brown bonus blocks flash and have the same catastrophic effect. Red or white circles appear on higher levels and spin rapidly around your ship, exploding unless shot.

Points are awarded according to the colour of the block destroyed, and time remaining to the end of the level (shown by a timer appearing on the display panel). Totals are stored in each of the eight sectors, and moving from screen to screen accumulates hit points. The points slowly count down when left, but stored points are added to the score whenever a sector is re-entered. Accumulating a hit points total of over 100 causes the level timer to count down rapidly, allowing faster entry to the next level.



It's sad, but true – Lazerwheel is a binary bummer. The concept is potentially outstanding, but it should have been expanded upon – at present, it considerably lacks variety and any addictive qualities. There's only one screen of tedious action, and nothing to inspire more than a couple of plays. I can't understand why Mastertronic decided to release this for three quid on the MAD label, when they've released POD for a quid less.



Lazerwheel is a very simple and moderately entertaining idea, but it becomes very repetitive after only a few goes. The main screen is neatly rendered and the movement of objects is smooth, but in the end it is plain and simply boring. A lower price might have been in order, especially when you consider the minimal variety.



Nicely presented, crisply designed and aurally pleasant – the only major problem with Lazerwheel is that the action is very simple and very dull. Sitting in the middle of a circular screen shooting things that move around the outer rim is pretty tedious. There's hardly any variety between the levels, and mental rigor mortis sets in after a couple of goes. Where's the action and excitement? Not here I'm afraid. Try POD or Void Runner.

PRESENTATION 58%
Relatively useful on-screen information, and decent instructions.

GRAPHICS 65%
Neat and functional – despite the lack of variety.

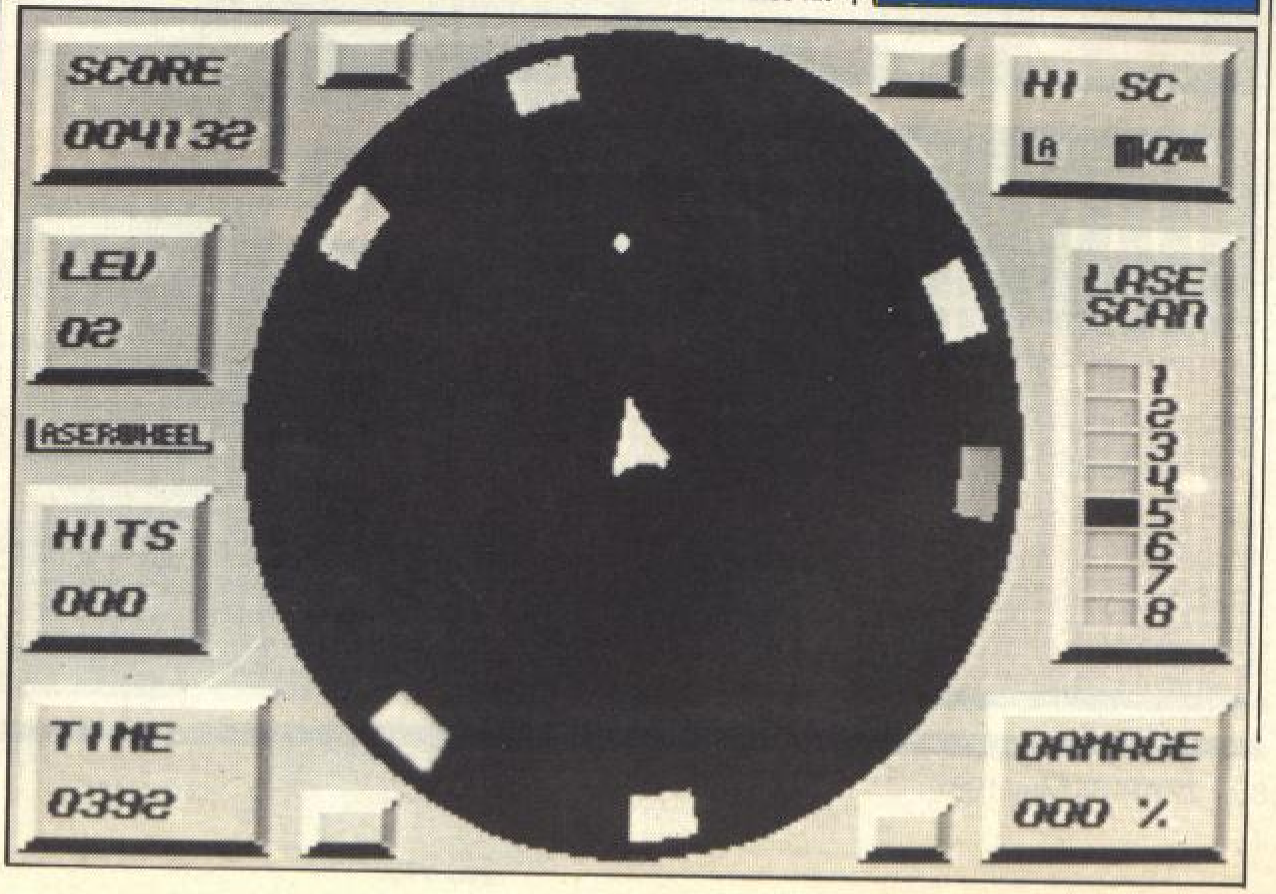
SOUND 56%
Bland soundtrack and average spot FX.

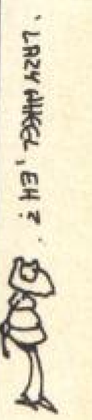
HOOKABILITY 48%
Immediately playable, but not very exciting.

LASTABILITY 24%
Not much to return to after a few plays.

VALUE 39%
Comparitively cheap, but hardly worth the effort.

OVERALL 31%
Looks good, but it plays like a brick.





ZZAP! TEST

POD

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

Shaun Southern, author of *Kik Start, Hero Of The Golden Talisman* and *Trailblazer*, brings you *Proof Of Destruction – POD.*

An alien force is invading your power-grid network, and armed only with a small POD craft, it is your task to remove them – using as much force as you feel necessary!

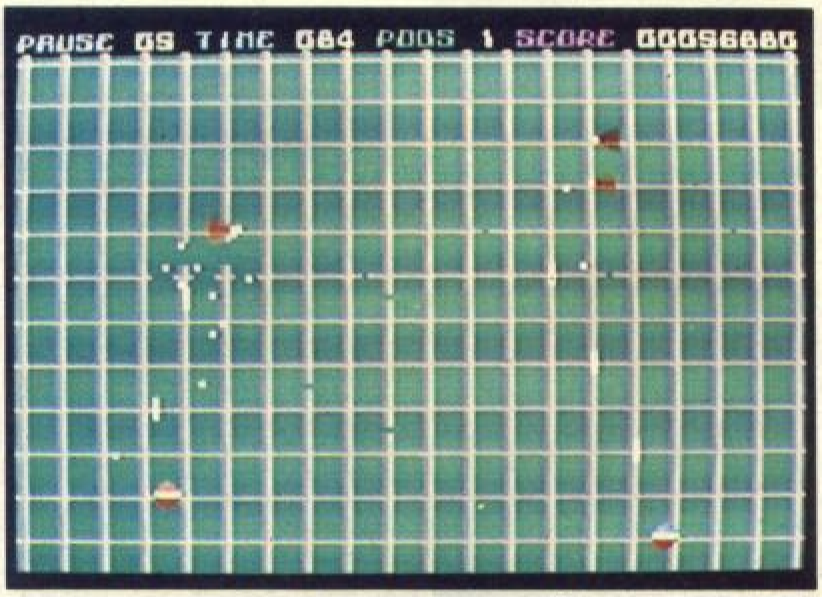


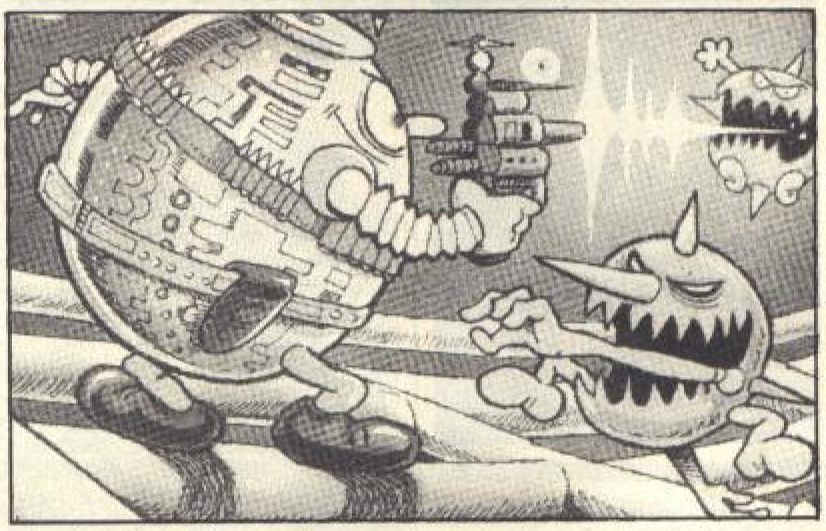
POD is very reminiscent of Gridrunner, only this one's been tweaked for **added playability. The bass line provides atmosphere and drives you on (and on and on). The graphics are sparse, but the emphasis is on highly colourful visual effects. There's not a great deal of variation, but it's packed with action and compulsively playable. If you're a shoot 'em up fan, put this at the top of your 'must buy' list.**

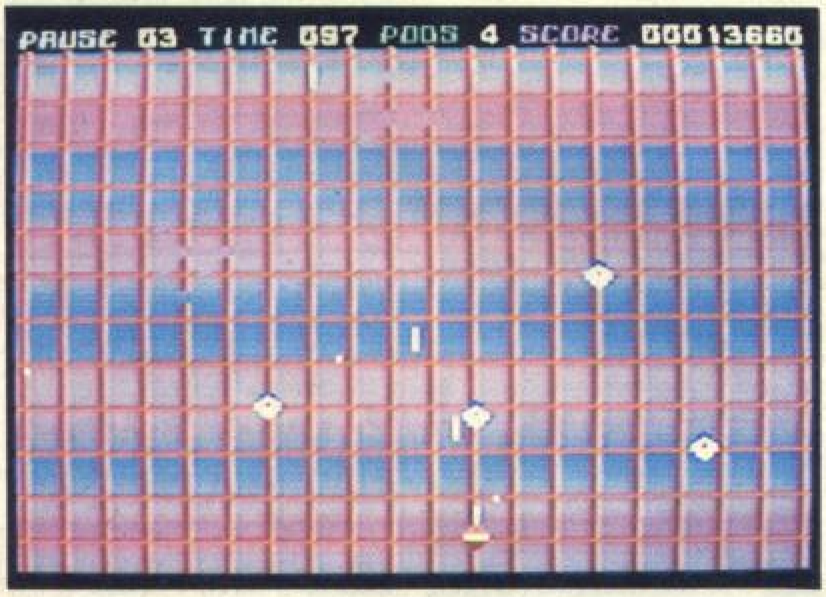


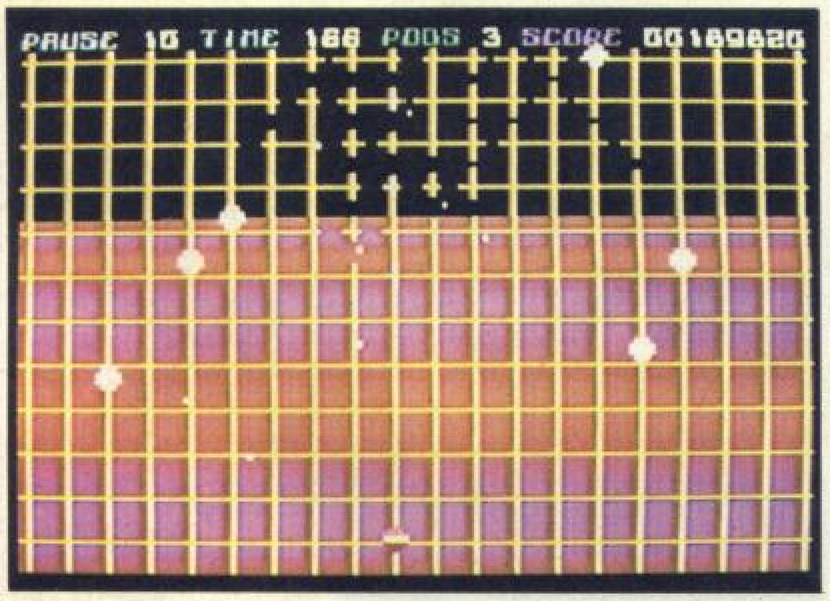
Shoot 'em up fans on a tight budget have never had it so good – Zone Ranger, Void Runner **and now** POD**. This is another colourful and frenetic annihilation game requiring dextral digits and good hand-to-eye co-ordination. The program is devilishly addictive, extremely challenging and should keep any trigger-happy maniac occupied for weeks. Finally, the two-player option is the icing on the cake – a foot of icing at that! Can you afford to miss it?**

The POD is controlled by keyboard or joystick, and appears at the bottom of the first grid system ready for battle. Alien ships move along the grid lines, firing in all directions and releasing missiles which plummet down the grid. Explosions damage the grid network, but the tracks are repaired in a few seconds to reform the lattice. Motion of the POD is limited to the grid system – thus, any breaks in the network can seriously hamper your manoeuvrability until the grid 'heals'.









The aim on each of the 25 levels is to stay alive for the duration of a time limit, shown at the top of the screen. Every fourth level is a bonus screen, presenting you with a chance to considerably improve your score by blasting as many aliens as possible.

Completing a level rewards you with an extra life (up to a maximum of five) and scoring is dependent on the level completed and the number of lives remaining.



Mastertronic certainly seem to be getting their act together these days: last month saw the release of Void Runner**, and now we are treated to** POD**, a similarly frenetic shoot 'em up. This could well have been written by Mr Minter, as it's very colourful and plays brilliantly (the Two-Player option is tremendous). The 25 levels should present a reasonable challenge to even the most die-hard of blasting fans, and it's varied enough to sustain interest. Go get it!**

There is an option to play a two-player game, whereby both combatants appear on screen together, working as allies to do battle with the aliens. Again only five PODs are available, and this time the score is amassed jointly.

PRESENTATION 78%
Simplistic but pleasant in many aspects – including the superb Two-Player option.

GRAPHICS 81%
Some neat visual effects combined with attractive colour cycling in the background – which unfortunately obscures aliens and their bullets at times.

SOUND 91%
Thumping good bass line plays throughout, interspersed with decent spot effects.

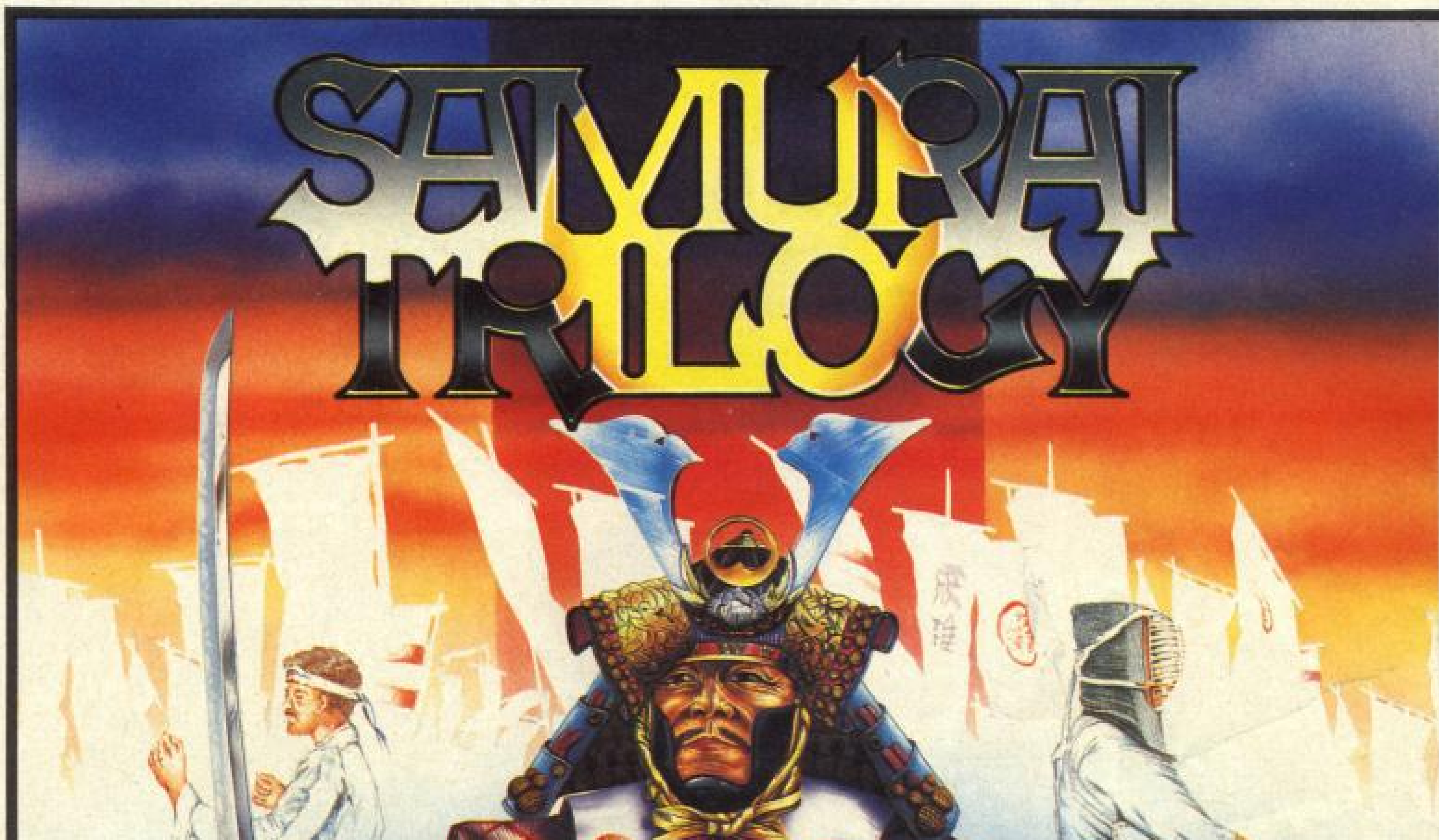
HOOKABILITY 92%
Grabs you from the start, and doesn't let go easily.

LASTABILITY 76%
Little variety, but plenty of action and levels, which are reasonably balanced to allow progress.

VALUE 92%
Two pounds well spent.

OVERALL 84%
A wonderful little shoot 'em up – highly polished and very playable.

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THE EQUALIZER

The Power House, £1.99 cass, joystick only

Disaster! Stone-age man's girlfriend has been captured, and is at this moment being held captive somewhere further up the evolutionary ladder. Infuriated by this, our Neanderthal Hero is about to risk life and limb to get her back.

His quest takes place across 18 horizontally scrolling landscapes, each representing a different evolutionary timescale. All manner of creatures attempt to bar his progress, their form depending on the timescale currently occupied: the first screen is inhabited by snails and lizards, while birds and insects appear later. Contact with these creatures is fatal, but they can be destroyed by a carefully aimed club. Other hazards to be avoided include large chasms and rocks, both of which appear at intervals throughout the landscape and prove deadly to the apeman.

Fruit is scattered along the landscape, suspended in the air until the apeman collects it. A special piece of fruit hangs at the end of a level, causing a heart to appear when picked. Touching the heart transports the hairy hero to the next, more difficult screen.

An energy bar counts down at the top of the display, showing the time remaining to finish the screen. When this runs out, a life is lost and the caveman restarts from the beginning of the current level.



So! The Equalizer **(uttered in throaty deep tones like a certain lager advert . . . then suddenly switches to a high-pitched squeal of surprise) is a little kiddy in a nappy? I was expecting some sort of all-powerful armed-to-the-teeth superhero . . . Oh well! This isn't too bad. It's colourful, mildly addictive and fairly challenging, and should keep any player amused for a few days. Look this up if you've already bought all of the other good budget games . . .**



The title of this game is slightly misleading, but behind the facade is a simplified but playable version of Wonder Boy. **The backdrops are colourful and the sprites are very cute. The urge to progress past the first couple of screens is quite strong, and it's a challenge which will not be easily conquered. There are a few bugs – especially in the sprite locations (where animals appear under the ground and so on), but this does not detract too much. Not the best budget game ever, but far from the worst.**



It's strange – The Equalizer **has some kind of appeal. It looks incredibly silly, but plays well. I found it quite addictive, not because it's a marvellous game, it's just that there's a compulsion to play through the levels. It's quite easy to get into, as the level of play becomes harder as you progress – more foes, more tricky leaps. There's plenty to keep you occupied, and possibly it's worth two quid of your cash.**







PRESENTATION 70%
Misleading title, but a useful restart feature and a free audio track included.

GRAPHICS 71%
Colourful backdrops and characters.

SOUND 53%
Decent effects and an average soundtrack.

HOOKABILITY 68%
The basic mixture of shooting and platform action proves moderately addictive.

LASTABILITY 56%
Quite a challenge to progress to the later levels – and there are enough of them.

VALUE 72%
Adequately entertaining for the price.

OVERALL 60%
Not entirely a waste of time – but far from an essential purchase.



ZZAP! TEST

NEMESIS

Konami, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

The peaceful inhabitants of Nemesis are under attack from the Evil Beings of The Sub-Space Star Cluster of Bacterion. As ever, help is at hand – you've volunteered to lead your squadron of three space fighters in a daring mission to defeat the mighty Bacterion invasion force.

Nemesis is a right-to-left scrolling shoot 'em up which takes place over five different sections



It's here at long last – the arcade game that destroyed a large proportion of my wage packet last summer! The good news is that it's not at all bad, nearly all of the original features have been included, and it plays very similarly to the arcade version. However, there is some bad news – the sprites flicker quite badly when the screen gets busy, which can be very off-putting. But, it's the playability that counts, and this has plenty. If you want a good arcade blast, this conversion is definitely worth your while.

of the planet. The first mission involves a hazardous journey across the forest section, while later levels are set over a series of



Nemesis **tries very hard to emulate its arcade counterpart and actually succeeds to a fair degree. The graphics are very smart with nice use of colour on aliens and backdrops, and many of the features of the arcade version are faithfully reproduced – consequently the action is fast and furious. There are loads of different sections (although some are recycled to be used as later levels), and there is a strong urge to progress as far as possible simply to see the next section. This Commodore version should prove enough of a challenge – even to hardened** Nemesis **fans.**

space islands, an alien graveyard and the inside of the giant Bacterion Battle-Cruiser.

Cruising through the levels, the fighter is constantly beset by Bacterion craft emerging from the all sides of the screen. Some fly in to attack, others walk across the landscape firing missiles, and still more emerge from silos. Contact with an alien ship or bullet is fatal, and the fleet of three ships is reduced by one. A giant mothership has to be destroyed at the end of each level before your fleet can progress.

The space fighter returns fire with defensive laser bolts, and occasionally, destroying an enemy craft produces a glowing credit. There are six icons at the



△ The mothership at the end of Level Four – it takes all available firepower to defeat it

▽ Blasting a path through an alien graveyard. Those aliens look dead, but they just won't lie down



▽ Zooming across the space equivalent of Easter Island, only in space the 'statues' are alive and spitting

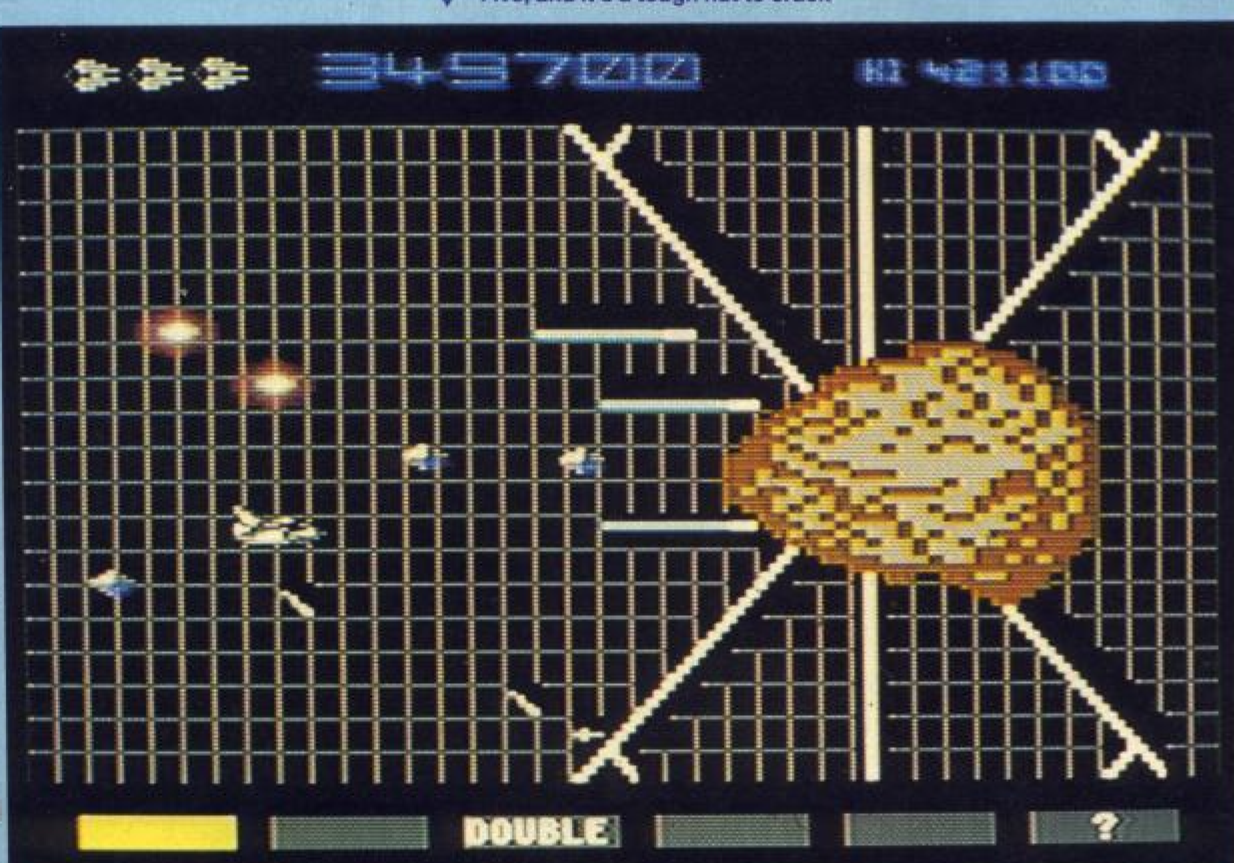




Tackling the giant mothership at the end of Level Two



Look out! Level One, the forest section looks as though it's going to claim a life – those missiles are just about to strike home



The brain behind the Bacteriod Invasion force can be found on Level Five, and it's a tough nut to crack

bottom of the screen, and collecting a credit highlights the far left icon. If another credit is collected, the second to left becomes highlighted, and so on.

Each icon represents one of six increasingly powerful features which can be added to the craft: Extra Speed, Air-To-Ground Missiles, Double Air-To-Ground Missiles, a Laser, Multiple Fire Power, and a Shield which absorbs enemy missiles. Pressing the right hand SHIFT key adds the highlighted icon's feature to the ship's equipment. The ship can carry a maximum of four Speed-Ups, Air-To-Ground Missiles, two Multiples, a Shield and either Lasers or Double Air-To-Ground Missiles – the icons become redundant once the feature is added. Lose a ship, and all of its collected icons disappear with it.



Nemesis isn't very polished, and there aren't that many levels – but it certainly has a lot to offer in the playability stakes. The action is fast and furious, and I particularly enjoy the thrill of being armed to the teeth with every conceivable piece of additional weaponry – so much power at the press of a button! The playing area is a little on the small side, and there are a few minor, mildly irritating flaws – such as the occasionally dodgy collision detection, and having to press the SHIFT key to activate weapons – but otherwise Nemesis is fine. It's not as slick as it could have been, but it's good enough, and stands out from the other horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups currently flooding the market.

PRESENTATION 71%
Four player option and unimpressive title screen. Awkward joystick/keyboard interaction.

GRAPHICS 80%
Mostly good, although some of the sprites and backdrops and a little coarse.

SOUND 78%
The same tune as the arcade version and some reasonable sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 90%
Instantly rewarding and addictive blasting action.

LASTABILITY 78%
There are five tough levels to crack, although the action may become repetitive after a while.

VALUE 78%
There's certainly enough action to warrant the price tag.

OVERALL 80%
A good, fast arcade blast. Check it out if you're keen on the arcade version.

GRANGE HILL

Argus Press Software, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

Gonch, one of those cheeky chappies from *Grange Hill*, has had his Walkman confiscated by the maths teacher. This is disastrous for the poor fellow as his Mum always asks to see it when he comes home, and if he hasn't got it . . . well, it doesn't bear thinking about. Consequently the lovable rogue has decided to slip back into school after hours and retrieve the said Personal Stereo. Hollo, Gonch's partner in crime, comes along to offer help and encouragement.

The display is split into two sections, with the top half showing a side-on view of the action, and the bottom half reserved for a text readout. Left or right on the joystick movements convey Gonch in the relevant direction, and walking off the screen results in a fresh one being bought into view. Occasionally, the two mates are required to clamber up or down obstacles – this action is also joystick controlled.

Pressing the fire button accesses a 'commands' menu. Using a joystick controlled icon, the player can make Gonch pick up/drop, examine, use, give/take objects, or talk to other characters. If the 'talk' or 'use object' options are selected, the player has then to type in the desired message or object name.

At the bottom right of the screen is a clock which ticks away throughout. If it reaches twelve and the Walkman hasn't been recovered Gonch has to return home for an ear-bashing. If he does, everything is hunky-dory and everyone can live happily ever after . . .

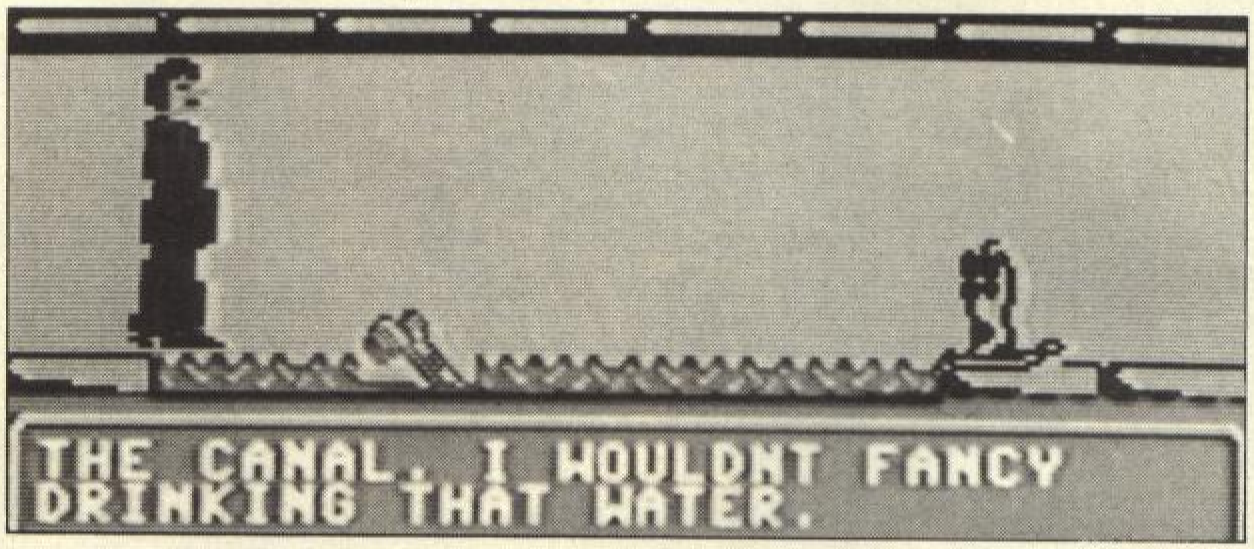


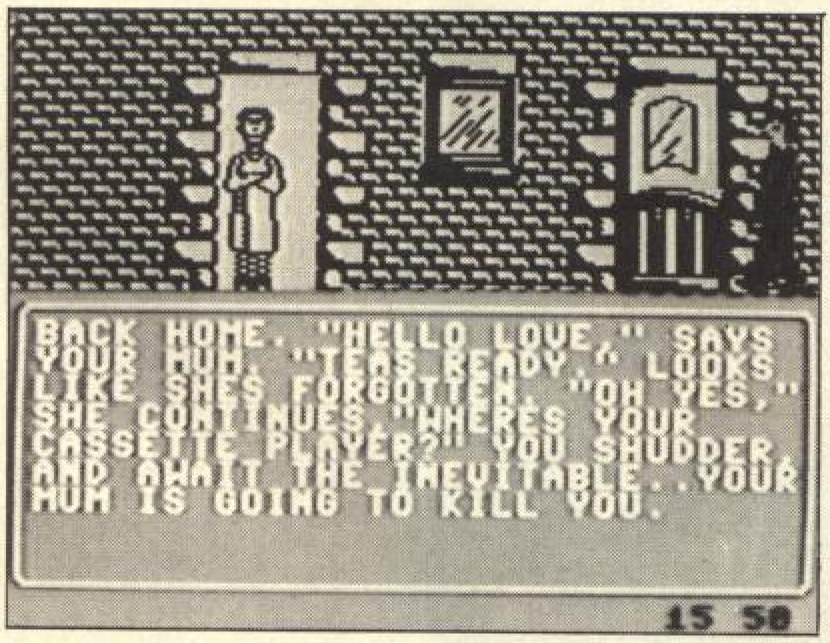
Here is one of the shoddiest, lacklustre, most pointless, unrewarding and unprofessional pieces of full-priced software I've had the misfortune to load into a Commodore. Not only is it full of bugs and spelling mistakes, it is also boring and completely fails to capture the atmosphere of the telly series. Some of the bugs are totally stupid. For example, in one location you can walk on the surface of the canal quite happily, but if you jump the character falls straight into the drink – perhaps his bounding around breaks the surface tension? Another annoying factor is the game structure, stupid things like tripping over a broken paving slab or banging into a bollard can bring an untimely end to the game – hardly realistic for a sprightly school boy! The graphics are pathetic – the badly animated, extremely low-res sprites skate around on what looks more like a nuclear aftermath than a London suburb. Even the storyline is woeful – a game to buy for your worst enemy perhaps?



Argus Press seem to have hit a bad patch recently, and Grange Hill **does nothing to alleviate this. While following a moderately novel (albeit silly) scenario, the game is made difficult and annoying to play by the number of bugs that litter the program, such as the strange canal and sprites that float around the screen. The spelling and English used throughout is appalling: 'crackeling', 'liying', and so on. If a software pusher comes up to you on the street offering this rubbish – just say no.**









What a disasterous waste of a licence this has turned out to be. It's awful, and left me wondering if it's really finished; atrocious spelling mistakes, poorly constructed sentences, abysmal graphics . . . I could go on, but it's only rubbing salt into the already gaping wound. To be fair, some of the flavour of the television series has been captured – it just hasn't been executed at all well. It's about time that Argus Press pulled their proverbial socks up, and put a little more thought and care into what they release.

PRESENTATION 66%
The useful icon system is let down by bugs and spelling mistakes in the text.

GRAPHICS 28%
Very poor backdrops, and the sprites don't look anything like Grange Hill students.

SOUND 65%
An unsuitable run-of-the-mill Dave Whittaker tune plays throughout and adds nothing to the atmosphere.

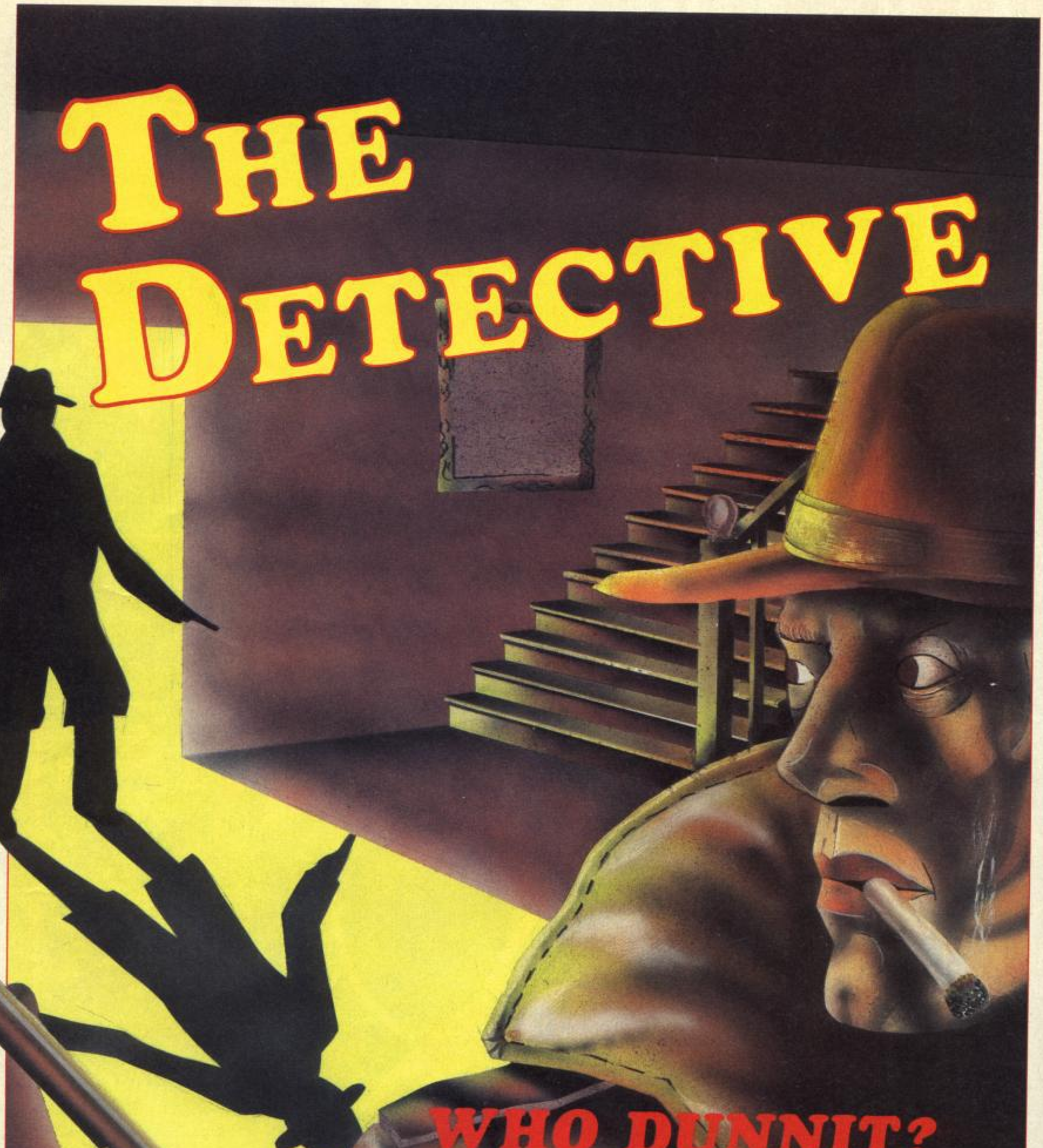
HOOKABILITY 31%
An interesting idea which may attract for a few plays.

LASTABILITY 17%
Poor gameplay, lack of depth and bugs ruthlessly crush any remaining enjoyable qualities.

VALUE 11%
Watch the telly series and spend your cash elsewhere.

OVERALL 19%
A very poor licensed product which lacks addiction, polish and a professional touch.


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ALIENS

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

Hot on the heels of Electric Dreams' officially licensed version of *Aliens*, comes this American edition, featuring six, separately loaded sections linked by digitised pictures and snatches of dialogue.

The first section deals with the space marines' drop to the planet, and as pilot, it's your job to guide the drop-ship through a series of concentric circles to the planet surface. A 'Profile Compliance' indicator tells you when you are straying off course – veer too far and the drop is aborted, forcing you to start from scratch.

Successfully landing the craft presents you with the next problem. Four Marines have become lost in the maze-like processor plant, and are now surrounded by Aliens. It's up to you to guide the team to the safety of the Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC). A main view-screen shows the Marines' immediate surroundings, with a motion tracker displaying the aliens' relative positions. A bio-monitor screen indicates each Marine's status, and flashes red to show that Aliens are about to attack. Annihilating an attack wave with your Pulse Rifle allows progress to the next location. Failure results in the death of the relevant Marine.

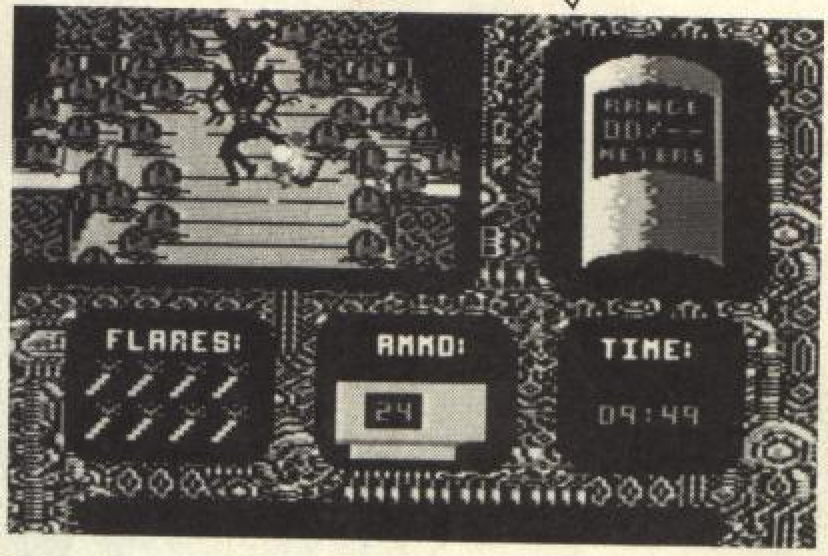
In the next stage the surviving troops are cornered at the rear of the operations room, with the aliens advancing thick and fast. The only way out is to torch a hole through a two-ton steel door. While the majority of the crew shelters in hiding, a single Marine fends off the horde with a flame thrower. Should an Alien pass, one of the remaining Marines is captured and used as an incubator.



The English interpretation of Aliens **captures the film's atmosphere beautifully. This American version however, is slick and over-produced – and that's not a compliment. The six sub-games are extremely simple, and though related to the cinematic action, they fail to capture the most important aspect of** Aliens **– the atmosphere. It's enjoyable enough, but each section only offers about half an hour's entertainment. The nail in the coffin is the multi-load system . . . Buy British and stay happy.**

Having escaped from the operations room, the troops scramble into the air ducts and attempt to find their way back to the drop-ship. An overhead view of the ducting is given, with Ripley and Newt displayed as coloured squares, surrounded by up to eight white dots representing the remaining Marines. When an Alien attacks, a suicidal Marine can be left behind to explode a grenade and kill the Alien. When all the Marines have been killed any further attack proves fatal.

On the way to the drop-ship, Newt is captured by the aliens and held within the processor plant – a determined Ripley ventures into the atmosphere processor to rescue her. A range finder counts down the distance between Ripley and Newt, allowing you to home in on the child. Ripley has 99 rounds of ammunition, and flares which can be dropped to guide her back to the elevator. Aliens are frequently met within the plant and can be blasted to bits or dodged to save ammunition.





I was immediately impressed by the on-screen presentation and in-game film-style credits. However, the six sub-games don't live up to initial expectations, being simplistic and sometimes laborious. Some of the sections are quite playable, but real atmosphere is sadly lacking. Aliens **remains a rehash of previously used Activision concepts strung together and neatly packaged to fit the bill. This is a shame, as the film is tailor-made for a good game – and this isn't it.**

When found, Newt follows Ripley back to the elevator. Here the Queen alien appears, and must be avoided before the two can reach the waiting drop-ship.

Eventually, the surviving members of the troop reach the mothership, and the relative safety of the docking bay . . . where the final confrontation between Ripley and the Queen Alien takes place.

Donning a power-loader, Ripley attempts to throw the Queen Alien through the air-lock. The Queen is stunned by repeated blows from the loader's arms – she soon tires and can be picked up and dumped into space.

When the Queen is dead, you can retire to the quiet of the hyper-sleep capsules and begin the long journey home . . .

PRESENTATION 83%
Good instructions and packaging. Some annoying delays experienced during play though.

GRAPHICS 70%
Range from excellent to average. Decent digitised pictures but otherwise nothing special.

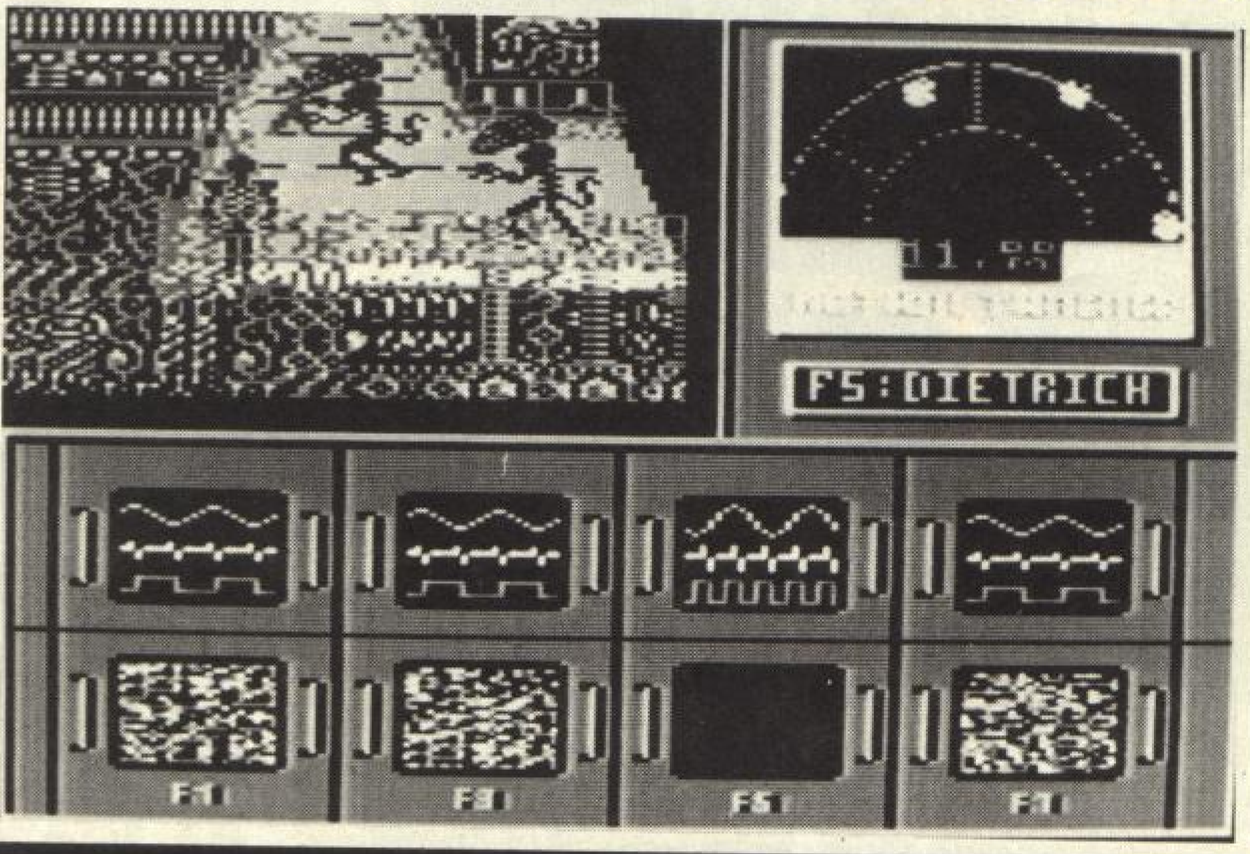
SOUND 67%
Reasonable (although occasionally unsuitable) music, and fair spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 65%
Easy enough to pick up and play, but it's irritating having to wait for introductory screens to finish.

LASTABILITY 53%
Some sections take longer to master than others, but all are limited.

VALUE 63%
Six simple games for the price of one.

OVERALL 66%
The enormous potential of the film hasn't been utilised, but the package is good in its own right.



SAILING

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

Riding high on the wave of nautical enthusiasm inspired by the Americas Cup, comes *Sailing* from Activision – a simplified simulation which attempts to give a realistic viewpoint of a yacht race as seen from the vessel's bow.

Before you are even allowed near a boat, the level of play has to be selected to determine your starting position in the league table, and hence the difficulty and length of the race.

The basic design of the ship can then be altered to suit the long-range weather forecast, which scrolls past at the bottom of the screen. A blueprint of your vessel is shown, with the variable dimensions represented numerically. Adjustments to the craft are joystick controlled, with forward and back selecting the desired option, and left and right changing its value. The blueprint is constantly redrawn as the dimensions are altered.



At first sight you would be tempted to think that a sailing game would be deathly dull, but Sailing surpasses all expectations. The view of the ocean is sufficiently realistic to give most people an odd sensation in high seas, and the sight of your opponent pulling away makes play both atmospheric and exciting. The only drawback might be the lack of variety between races – the course always remains the same, and once the controls have been mastered interest could well disappear.

Aspects of the ship's design which can be changed include: the overall length; water-line length; height of the hull from the water-line, and mast length. It's also possible to change the material from which the hull is made, and add wings to the keel for stability.

Having settled on a design, it's then time to get down to some serious racing . . .

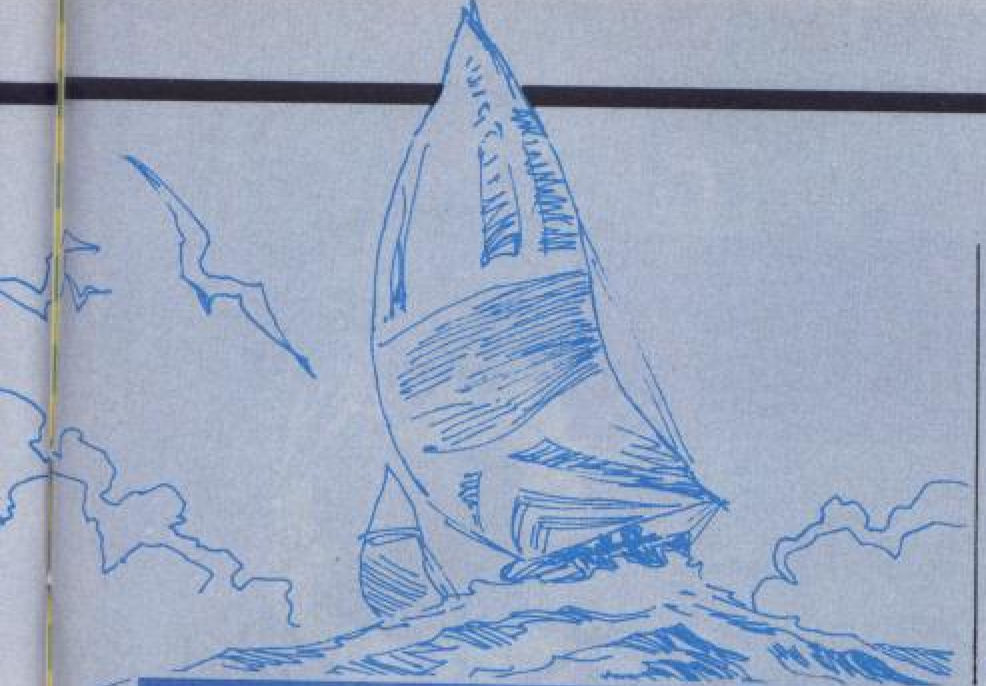
A list of potential opponents is highlighted, and their ship's blueprints presented for inspection – enabling you to decide which team to race against. When an adversary has been selected, the race begins . . . the screen display changes to show a view from the bow of your ship, with your opponent lying abreast of you, facing the first buoy. The objective is simple: sail around three buoys as



I thought that a sailing program would never really work on a computer, but I was wrong – this is very playable and exhilarating. Mind you, it's not really a boating simulation – more of an unusual arcade race game. You don't have to worry too much about trimming the sails and all that, the trick is getting the wind behind you and whizzing around the course as quickly as possible. The initial opposition is easy to beat, but later countries are very skillful and a lot of practice is necessary before they can be overcome. The boat design screen is great and epitomises the program's superb presentation. All in all, this is a nice race game – requiring skill and clear thinking rather than ultra-fast reflexes and nimble fingers.

The Italian yacht edges ahead





quickly as possible – and beat the opposition to the final flag.

The craft is controlled by steering left and right, and raising and lowering the spinnaker for extra speed when the wind is favourable. The sail is 'winched' by rotating the joystick – anti-clockwise to raise, and clockwise to lower.

Beneath the view-screen is a panel showing details relevant to the race: the wind speed/direction and spinnaker status (up, lowered or stowed). There's also a radar screen, showing the positions of your ship, your opponent, and the buoys which define the course of the race.

After five days of racing, you are given a week in which to trim your vessel in readiness for the next bout of competition. Inspecting the league positions and competitors' blueprints allows you to see how the different designs respond to the current weather conditions, enabling you to achieve optimum performance from your ship.

Altering the basic design of the yacht to suit predicted weather conditions







What a pleasant surprise this turned out to be. I wouldn't have expected a sailing game to be so absorbing – but I became thoroughly involved after only a few plays. There's very little real substance to it – sailing around a triangular course, coping with a single competitor and differing weather conditions . . . it doesn't sound like much fun. But it is! The music works remarkably well, and combined with the simple but effective spot FX, generates a gripping atmosphere. The sea moves convincingly, and, surprisingly, watching the waves tends to induce malaise more than when you are actually sailing! My only real complaint is that the instructions don't go into enough detail, which is annoying, but not overly off-putting.

PRESENTATION 90%
Superb, although the instructions could have been a bit better.

GRAPHICS 76%
Little variety, but what's there is convincing and effective.

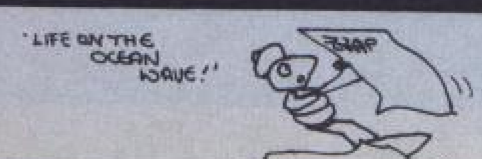
SOUND 91%
A fabulous atmosphere is generated by a great tune combined with suitable spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 86%
Easy enough to get to grips with, although the lack of information regarding the wind direction and use of spinnaker can prove a mite confusing.

LASTABILITY 60%
Mildly compulsive, but sadly lacking variety – a two player, head to head option would have compensated.

VALUE 71%
A touch overpriced considering its limitations.

OVERALL 80%
An atmospheric and surprisingly playable boat racing game.



TEST

THE GROWING PAINS OF ADRIAN MOLE

Virgin Games/Mosaic, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, keyboard only



Once again, Sue Townsend's interpretation of a neurotic adolescent's diary appears in computer game form with this release, the second in the Adrian Mole series. In this companion to *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*, we follow Adrian as he perseveres through more school turmoil, and wade through his turbulent family life at home in Laurel close, Leicester.

The adventure unfolds as a series of descriptive scenes followed by multiple choice questions, with the answers enabling you to guide Adrian through each new crisis. Each separate event in Adrian's life is illustrated by a small drawing which takes up the top part of the screen, while the text scrolls up from the bottom.



Having enjoyed both of the Adrian Mole **books, I was intrigued to see how this second adventure would turn out – especially as I had missed the first. Sadly, I am not very impressed. The content of the game is good, and even quite humorous at times, but the multiple choice directions tend to distance you from the action. Also, the small series of options presented seriously limits the gameplay, and doesn't drastically alter the course of the action. Consequently it is more like reading an interactive novel than actually taking part in an adventure. It took me about an hour and a half to finish all four sections, and I doubt if I'll be returning to it.**



The plot takes you through a year and a half of Adrian's life, during which time you amass a percentage rating based on Adrian's relationships with the other characters – the more popular he becomes, the higher your rating.

The scenario sticks quite closely to the novel, and all of the familiar characters are included. Previous knowledge of the book will not help in the choice of actions however, as many of the situations have been altered to involve new twists.

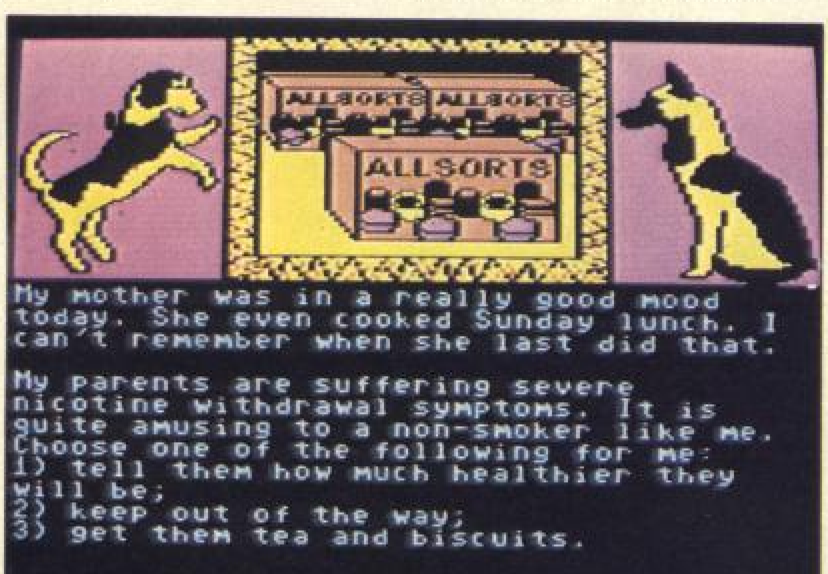


Adrian Mole **is enjoyable from the outset – it's simple to understand, well presented and often humorous. However, after the sequence of events have been played through a few times and all the responses given, it won't provide much lasting interest. Unlike other adventures you don't need to solve a particular problem before progressing any further – your score simply alters according to your actions. This is quite helpful as you're never stuck with one problem for hours at a time – but again, this reduces the lasting interest. The graphics are reasonable – being of a similar abstract kind as in the last** Adrian Mole **game, but the absence of sound is a let down as it might of added a bit more sparkle to an otherwise average game.**



Ten out of ten for humour . . . but unfortunately Adrian Mole **is neither a game or an adventure. Playing it is very similar to reading a book, although, to be fair, you do get the chance to prod a key once every few minutes and get a score at the end. The big problem, however, is that once you've read through the text there's no compulsion ever to return, regardless of score. If you've read the books forget it – if you haven't, buy them and use the change to purchase a couple of budget games.**

There are four separately loaded levels. A score is given on completion of each, along with the option to replay the last section.



PRESENTATION 51%
Adequate instructions, and the lack of options is due to the program's style.

GRAPHICS 31%
Rapidly drawn and neat enough, but superfluous, as they don't add anything to the atmosphere.

SOUND N/A

HOOKABILITY 83%
The multiple choice method is simplicity itself to get to grips with . . .

LASTABILITY 40%
. . . but this seriously limits the scope of the game.

VALUE 38%
Expensive – especially when you consider that you can buy both novels for much less.

OVERALL 52%
Humorous, but not enough interaction or gameplay to enthuse.



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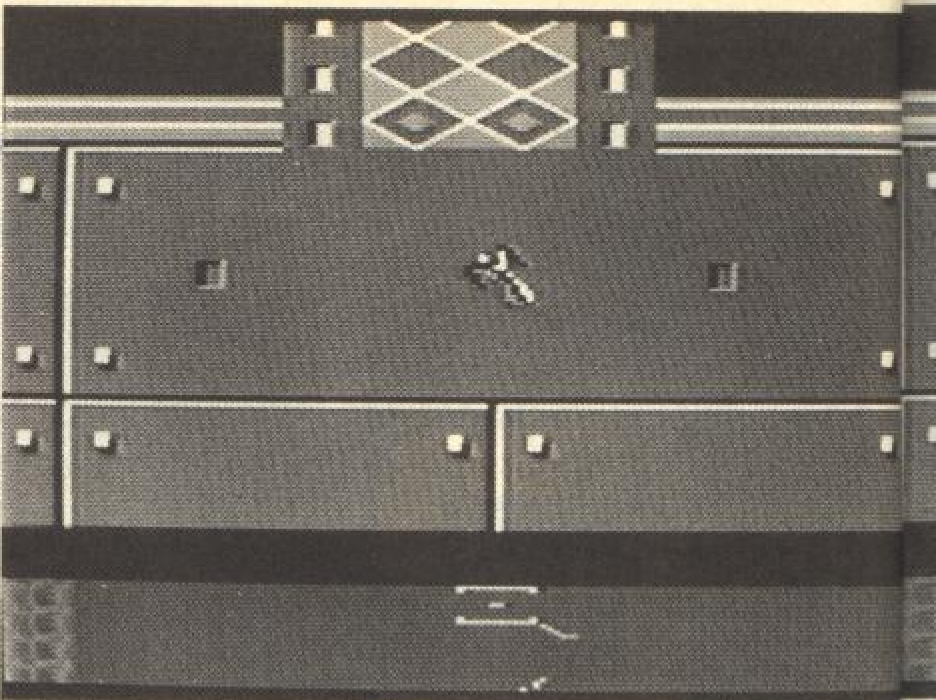
You have been assigned another routine patrol duty guarding a large mothership *en route* to a new Galaxy. Everything looks fine, when suddenly a surprise attack on the Earth is launched and all hell breaks loose. Several divisions of alien fighters close in on your ship and the duty doesn't seem so routine any more!



This is a pretty feeble budget shoot 'em up. The title screen and some of the effects are pretty, but there's nothing in the gameplay to get you going. The first section is a fiddly and very poor multi-directional blaster, the second part is an extremely weak 'get your sprite safely down the scrolling tunnel' job, and the last part is a crummy two-way scrolling Commando **without the shooting. Even at three quid it's overpriced. Why not check out** Zone Ranger **or** Void Runner **instead – they're a quid cheaper!**



The first thing that struck me was that it's called Cyber One **on the inlay, but has** Cyborg **splashed all over the title screen – spooky, eh? The game itself is pretty average: none of the three sections managing to inspire to any great extent. The shoot 'em up stage is poor, having bland graphics and an annoying control system. Being wary of the 'Mega Speed' in the tunnel of death is mildly entertaining and by far the best part of the program. The final maze-type section is rather uninteresting and possibly impossible to complete: the instructions tell you to blast the robots with your laser. This is rather difficult as you don't have one, and avoiding the robots is *very* difficult. The term 'budget' should not mean that a game is quickly thrown together and sloppily packaged. At three quid, this is still overpriced. Don't bother.**



The initial action takes place over the surface of the mother ship. Your patrol vessel, Cyber One, remains in the centre of the screen and the multi-directional background scrolls with it. A scanner is situated below the main screen, displaying the entire combat area and the position of the attacking fighters.

When all of the enemies' ships have been destroyed, they send their main power station in as a last resort. This is highly manoeuvrable and heavily defended, absorbing several direct hits before it succumbs.

Having dealt with the station, you are transported to the enemy base to negotiate the 'Tunnel of Death' which leads to their headquarters. A side view of the tunnel scrolls past at speed, and any contact with its walls results in the destruction of your ship.

The light at the end of this treacherous tunnel is the enemy HQ, which has to be searched for hidden star – when these are collected the base is rendered useless.



I get the impression that Cyber One **is not quite finished. The graphics are crude, specially in the first stage, and are hardly imaginative – just like the gameplay in fact. I managed to get through to the third stage the first time I played, and after a few further plays I was bored beyond belief – it's so tedious, and hardly worth 50 pence, let alone three quid!**

CON-QUEST

MAD, £2.99 cass, joystick or keys

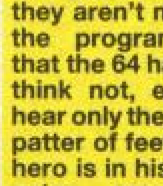
Oscar is having trouble with spectral squatters. He's just moved into a large Gothic castle, only to find that the place is haunted by the evil demon Grell and his dastardly minions. He asked the wailing and clanking bunch to leave, but all they did was laugh and throw his crockery around – poor old Oscar! His last remaining chance is to force them out, and the only way he can do that is by searching the castle for objects which give him the power to do so.

The screen displays a 3D view of the current location, with Oscar moving freely within the screen limits – moving through one of the doors brings a fresh room into view. A display panel at the bottom of the screen features four icons (used to pick up, drop, inspect or use any items found), five pockets (used to carry objects) and a soul (energy) meter.

Throughout his ramblings, Oscar is constantly attacked by the evil demon's minions. These spooks are quite dangerous, and a mere touch from one of them is enough to reduce the power of



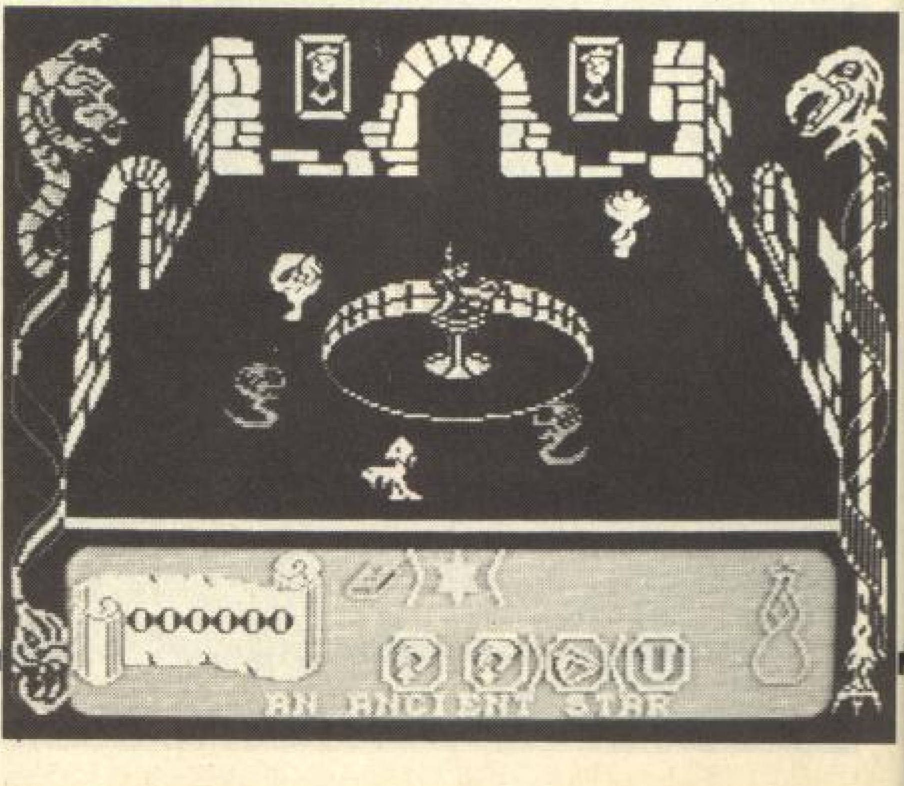
It's regression time, folks. This horrid little program reminds me of the tacky 'anything will sell' Spectrum software that emerged during the boom of 1983. Looking at this for the first time you wouldn't think think that this was a piece of Commodore software at all; the graphics are crumbly, there's no sound to speak of and the gameplay is awful. Trying to get some sort of enjoyment out of this is like trying to get blood out of a stone. A repellent program that should be avoided – even at its relatively cheap price.



Great! With Con-Quest **we can all pretend our 64s are Spectrums! Seriously though, this is a real let down. The characters are all single colour and make a horrible mess when they collide. Even the backdrops are little more than line drawings signifying doors. It's got its qualities . . . but they aren't much. Oh, and did the programmer remember that the 64 has a sound chip? I think not, especially when I hear only the badly timed pitter patter of feet – even when the hero is in his bubble! I usually enjoy maze and solving games, but** Con-Quest **has not been exploited to its full, and only leaves a uninspiring game.**



Those people who yearn for the good old days when the Spectrum was the state of the art, need look no further than Con-Quest **for their next game – it's visually and aurally ancient. To say that the gameplay is simplistic is an understatement – it's appalling in all respects, and the three pound price tag is a joke. Steer well clear.**



less. Guardian robots patrol the complex corridors, and contact with them depletes your energy. Four lives are given and complete energy drain results in the loss of one life. When all your lives are used, the mission has failed and the Earth is destroyed.

PRESENTATION 41%
Uninformative instructions and obvious differences between the inlay and the game itself. Nice title screen though.

GRAPHICS 63%
Uninteresting throughout, with large areas of colour and little detail.

SOUND 59%
Fair spot effects, and bland title music from Battlestar Galactica.

HOOKABILITY 44%
Instantly playable, but very tedious.

LASTABILITY 25%
Easy enough to get through to the final section, but virtually impossible to get any farther.

VALUE 32%
At a pound a section, it still seems too much.

OVERALL 29%
Three average sections loosely hung together to form a very weak budget release.

Oscar's soul. Oscar dies if his soul meter disappears entirely, but there is a cure – finding the Globe of Invulnerability allows Oscar to touch the ghosts without being harmed. This is a useful boost, and Oscar is going to need all the help he can get if the supernatural squatters are going to be made homeless.

PRESENTATION 71%
Fairly good icon system, but little else.

GRAPHICS 14%
Ineffective backdrops and badly animated, single colour sprites.

SOUND 3%
Two or three very crude and unsuitable spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 31%
There *may* be some initial exploring fun . . .

LASTABILITY 16%
. . . but very little to persuade you to reload.

VALUE 30%
The cheap price may be of some commiseration.

OVERALL 15%
A very poor arcade adventure which is well below today's standards.



SOS

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

Sydney the droid has crashed his plane in the ruins of the main city on Alpha Five – and since you sent him in the first place, you'd better get him back.

Your task is to guide the stricken robot around the city complex, attempting to find the plane's radio which was thrown clear during the accident. Having found this, Sydney can go 'on the air' and guide the rescue team in to pick him up.

A flick-screen, forced perspective 3D view of the city is given, showing the pathways and features that Sydney has to negotiate. Unfortunately, the city is not as deserted as previously thought; there are still functional robots patrolling the grounds who eat the little droid on sight.

Sydney's progress through the city's pathways is blocked by obstructions, including computer terminals and barriers. These are removed by the logical application of objects that are found lying around – floppy disks, flags and coins can prove to be very handy.

Time passes rapidly on Alpha Five – the day is short-lived and the nights are very dark indeed. The display gradually darkens as the sun sets, and poor old Sydney can make little progress during the darkest hours. Once again, there are objects lying around to accommodate this, thus helping to make Sydney's task all the easier.

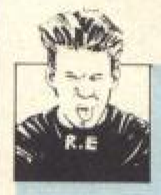
A display panel below the main window gives details of Sydney's status and a list of his current acquisitions. The unfortunate android starts off with three lives, and restarts from his present position when a life is lost.



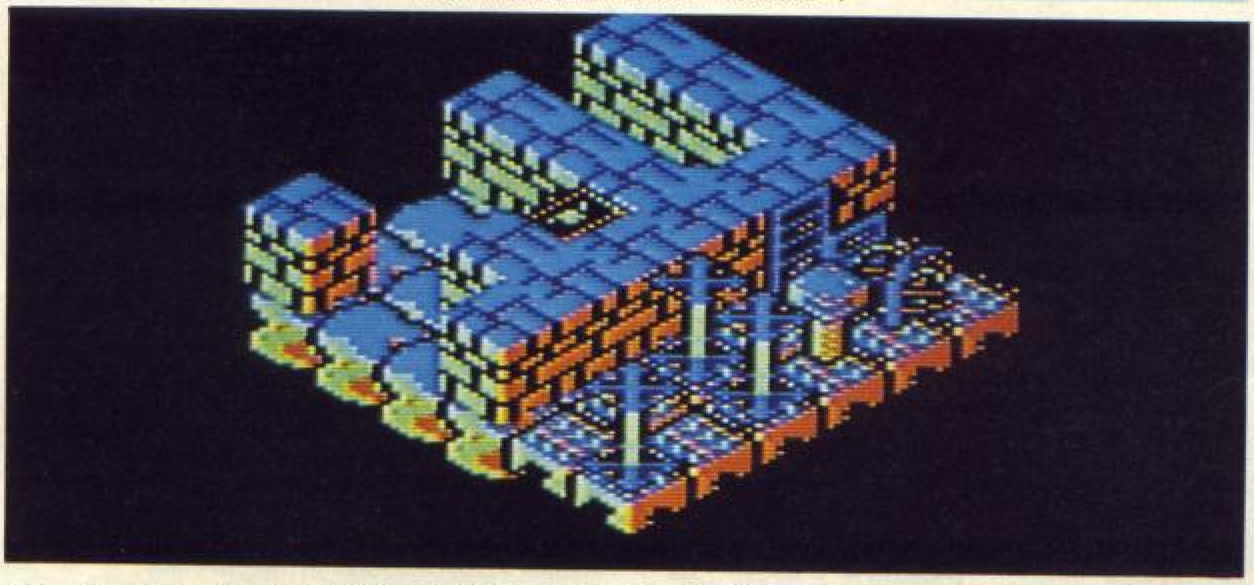
I must admit to not being overly enthusiastic about this type of game. However, SOS **is better than most I have seen and is really quite enjoyable to play. The city is very neatly displayed, being clear and uncluttered. The characters' animation is reasonable, and the effect of night falling is really good. This won't be everyone's cup of tea, but at two pounds, it puts many similar games to shame.**

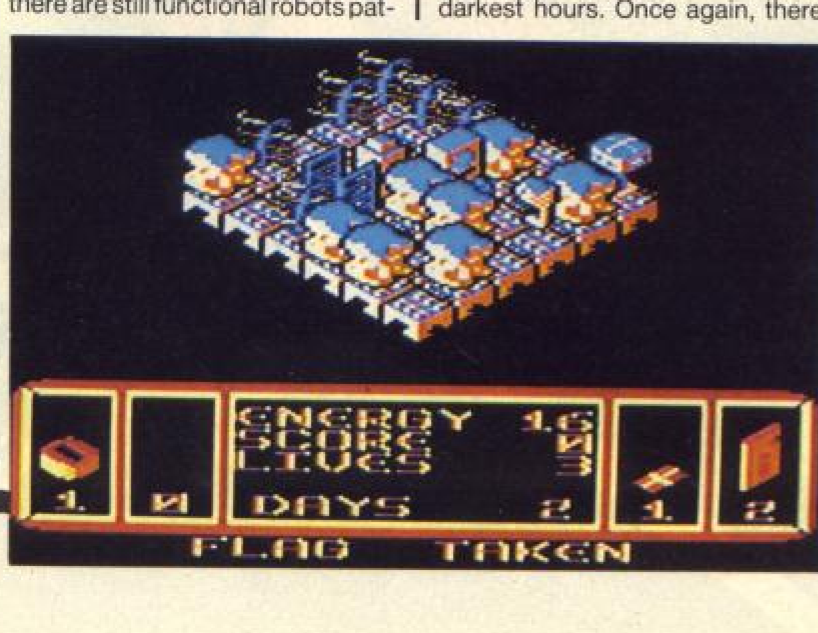


Initially I thought that this was really horrible, but subsequent play has caused me to amend my opinion slightly. The control method is a little on the tricky side and can make things a bit frustrating, but it's an enjoyable game nevertheless, and it can get pretty addictive – especially when you start mapping things out and getting to know the ropes. It doesn't look or sound at all impressive, but arcade adventurers should give it a whirl – it's not bad for two quid.



Very few 3D arcade adventures work on the 64, so I didn't have high hopes for this. The playing area is so small that the scenery becomes confusing, and it's difficult to see where the paths lead – especially when you consider the colours involved (a horrible mixture of purple and brown). The control method is one I particularly hate – rotate to face the right direction and then hop forward. SOS isn't enjoyable, as there's a need to be too precise in your movements to make it playable. Even at two quid it's hardly worth it.





PRESENTATION 75%
Neat, apart from the awkward control method.

GRAPHICS 67%
Quick, smooth, unimaginatively coloured, and a little messy at times.

SOUND 42%
Nothing remarkable.

HOOKABILITY 55%
Easy enough to play – and die, unfortunately.

LASTABILITY 66%
Large mappable playing area, and sufficient puzzles to solve.

VALUE 72%
Plenty of depth for two quid.

OVERALL 59%
A slightly above average maze game, marred somewhat by the constant need to restart.



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THE TERMINAL MAN

At long last, and after many requests, THE TERMINAL MAN comic strip is back in a new 12-part adventure starting next month. But first, a six-page resumé of the first 12 episodes to set the scene . . .

Memories of heat . . .
Memories of fire . . . A giant was dying . . .





Stricken by an anomalous hyperspatial jump, parts of the great liner Arcadia crashed spectacularly onto the barren surface of the strange planet. Amid the crackling fires a few survivors stood numbed by shock, yet were still capable of surprise at the sight of a lone man striding unscathed from the hottest part of the conflagration.

His uniform tag said he was Cross, one of the Arcadia's officers. Wielding authority coldly, he ordered the survivors to find a means of getting away from the wreck. A passenger protested; in the event of an accident, they were supposed to remain close to the liner. Cross pointed at the sky . . .



The system into which they had been flung contained thousands of planets arranged in what Cross explained was a Dyson Sphere – a feat of technology far beyond the capabilities of Earth Federation scientists. But the planet's inhabitants were primitive, as the survivors discovered moments later when they were attacked by warriors. Through ingenuity and quick-thinking, Cross drove them off by releasing a super-cooled stream of liquid oxygen from a cylinder. The attackers fled, carrying one prisoner with them.

With the threat removed, Jin Kimas, a girl with some Psi Powers, examined Cross' hands for oxygen frost burns, but she found none. Her suspicions aroused, she demanded to know who Cross was – and to her horror, he showed her . . .





During Arcadia's last dying moments, in the intense heat of the fires on board, a strange silicon virus in the planet's atmosphere invaded the ship's computer and reacted with the partly consumed body of Officer Cross. The new being 'rebuilt' missing parts of its host body using computer graphics, so that the computer could fulfil its primary function – to get the Arcadia's passengers – or what remained of them – safely back to Earth.

Cross began moving the survivors away from the smouldering hulk, across the barren landscape. After many hours they came to a poor mud village where Cross and Jin spoke to an old man and asked him where they might find the starships that traded between the Dyson Sphere's planets. The ancient was whimsical. It was blasphemous to utter the word 'starship' – yet he knew it to be part of their racial memory. The ships were long gone and forgotten – almost . . .

In the wicked city of Kebwob, its despot Vilgarre enjoyed breakfast on his high balcony, entertained by the pains of a 'heretic' who was being tortured for talking of flying through space and visiting other worlds – the captured prisoner from the Arcadia. Vilgarre supported his priests – their religion was another in his arsenal of political weapons for the oppression of his subjects – but he had an interest in the planet-infested sky above which was not so Godly.

He hoped the 'heretic' from the blazing wreck could tell him something of his flying ship's nature, perhaps something of the worlds out there that Vilgarre craved to rule, and more to the point, how a star vessel worked.



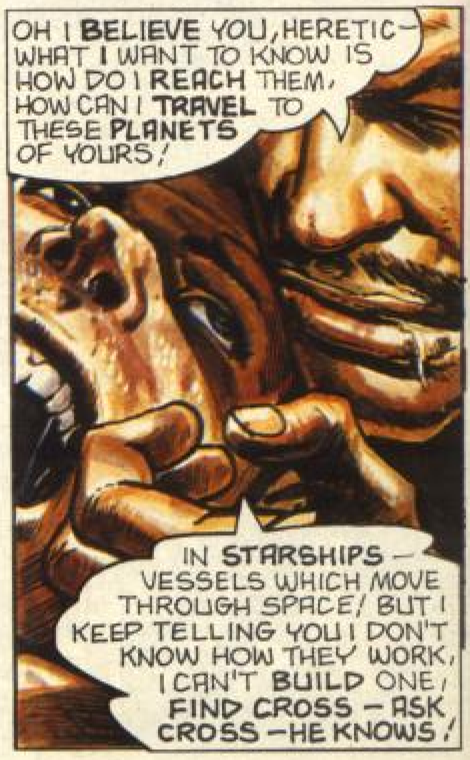
But the passenger was no physicist. In his pain he babbled about a man called Cross, the only one who might know how to build a space ship for Vilgarre and help him spread his empire across the sky.

In the village Cross and Jin learned from the old man that guarded religious relics lay in the desert, but from the way he spoke of them Cross suspected they might be the remains of old space ships. Leaving the survivors in the care of the villagers, Cross, Jin and a gambler called Mandrell set off in search of the relics.

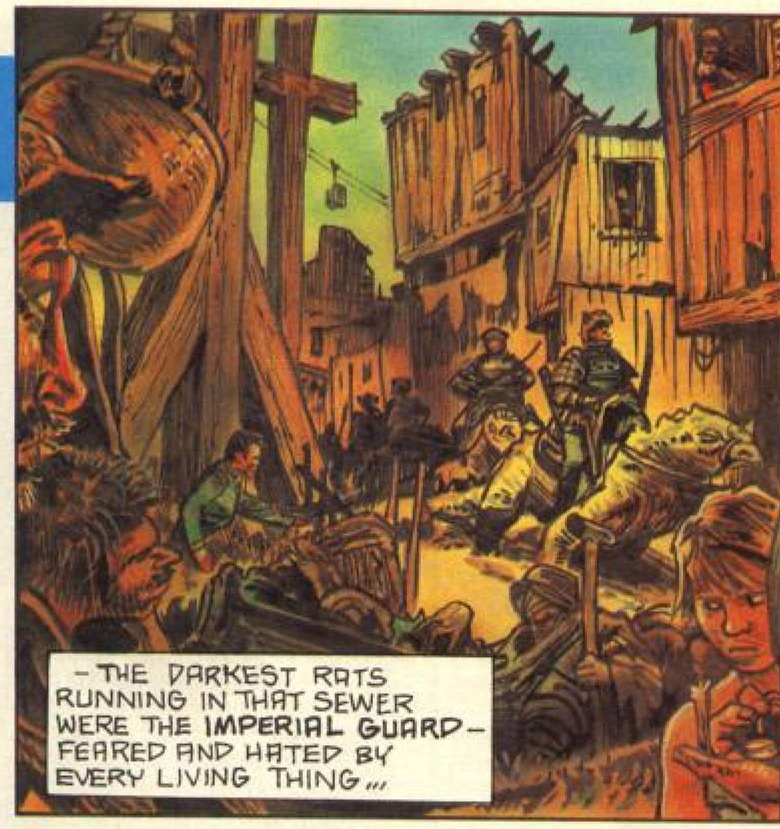
After many days journeying, they came across the ancient hulks, and approached them unchallenged. Leaving Mandrell and Jin to keep watch, Cross located the ship computer's vestigial memory and merged with it. But it was quickly apparent that the vessels had lain there for centuries – they would never fly again.

The three returned to the village to find death all around. One fellow lived long enough to tell them that Vilgarre's men had attacked, slain the villagers and left with the Arcadia's survivors in chains.

With his peculiar abilities, the departing soldiers' infra-red trail across the desert was still clear to











Cross. So he set off with Jin and Mandrell in pursuit.

The trail lead them to Kebwob, but with its high, well-guarded walls Cross' computer mind calculated their chances at getting in as being very low. Mandrell had a plan however – one that played on a very human emotion Cross knew nothing about – greed.

The story was that Mandrell, a man made mad by gambling and possessed of valuable trinkets (such as digital watches), only liked to gamble for belts. The guards that stopped them at a main gate were taken in – what could they lose but their belts? Inside the guardhouse Mandrell lost enough to keep the game going, until Cross had collected all the guards' belts. Then he, Jin and Mandrell made a dive for the street side-door, and escaped as the surprised guards tripped over their collapsing trousers.

Cross, Mandrell and Jin took shelter in the poorest quarter of Kebwob, a city terrorised by the fearsome Imperial Guards, Vilgarre's bluntest weapon of oppression. But their presence was hard to hide and soon enough Vilgarre's guards found them. They were searching for 'the tall one' who was required to watch the 'heretics' being purified in the great Cathedral.

But Cross had different notions.

Unaware of the outlander's superhuman strength, the Guard Commander's last scrap of awareness, as his own blade sliced through his throat, was to discover just how little he knew. Jin and Mandrell grabbed any weapons they could lay hands on. But there were too many enemies, and the three were forced to flee through the rear of the building, out towards a primitive suspended railway behind the hovel.

Grabbing one of the wooden boxes that passed for cars on the moving railway, they leapt aboard and were taken out of the station across the rooftops. The chasing guards boarded the following car, but suddenly Jin saw another car approaching from the opposite direction, also filled with enemies. They were trapped!

In desperation, Cross reached up to the pulley carrying their car on the overhead rope, and stopped it from





turning. The friction this created he used to amplify the virus in his system and provided power to burn through the rope. It snapped, plunging their car a few feet through the flimsy wooden roof of a house. But the guards plummeted much further, down into the crowded streets below, and were maimed or killed.

Next day Cross, Jin and Mandrell made their way, disguised as locals, toward the great Cathedral for the 'purification' ceremony. Their first sight of Vilgarre was of a darkened figure in the Imperial Box, listening as the High Priest intoned ritual words. Huddled together near the high altar stood the 'heretics' – Arcadia's remaining passengers – awaiting their sacrifice. Cross stepped forward and challenged Vilgarre to stop the ceremony.

Astonished silence met his demand. Then the High Priest protested the sacrilege. But for a moment Vilgarre remained silent – he had what he wanted – the man who could make or find him a Starship.

'Take him!' he ordered the guards. The nearest man attacked, sabre drawn. But Cross merely caught the weapon by its blade, and forced the amazed, then terrified guard down to the ground. Cross's hand showed no sign of lacerations from the razor sharp sword, and his ferocity quelled any further enthusiasm to approach him.

Again he turned to the despot and demanded that Vilgarre give him back his people. Vilgarre sensed a deal would have to be struck – a starship in return for the 'heretics'. The bargain would be easy enough to break later.

In his castle, Vilgarre, having heard of their discovery of the old hulks in the desert, told Cross of more relics which he might visit. He told them that they were to be found in the Burning Lands, a place from which few men had emerged alive. And he gave Cross 30 days to return, with a space ship – otherwise the Arcadia's passengers would all die.

With no other options open, Cross, Jin and Mandrell set off on mounts supplied by Vilgarre for the Burning Lands. When they had departed, Vilgarre descended to the depths of his castle to awaken Karrian, an immortal, old beyond measure, wrecked, enslimed in evil and bound to Vilgarre by arcane ties. Vilgarre ordered Karrian to follow Cross, watch him, and be ready to kill all three when the right moment arrived and a working space ship had been discovered.

Deep in the post-nuclear Burning Lands, Mandrell was startled when Cross told him they were looking for usable fuel cells, not a space ship. Vilgarre already had the starship within his grasp, Cross explained, only the despot didn't realise it. Cross would say no more and Jin's pre-occupations were with the evil she sensed following them.

They came to a terrifying gorge 20 klicks deep. The trio were pondering a means of getting across when, suddenly, natives held aloft on hang gliders attacked them.

With his computer-fine instincts for gauging distance and speed, Cross leapt down onto the nearest assailant, knocked him from his perch and then glided round frightening off the remaining attackers. Lower down the chasm Cross landed and discovered the natives' village clinging to vertical rocks. It was unnaturally quiet though, something had slain all its inhabitants. Joining him, Jin sensed that the evil thing following them had done the killing. Cross discovered a sailwing, big enough to carry the three of them, and mounting it, they headed for the opposite side of the gorge.

Once safely down, the explorers continued on foot, taking occasional rests. It was during one such stop that they were startled by an ancient cowled figure approaching, offering to guide them. Jin urged Cross to ignore it, knowing that this was the evil presence she sensed had been following









them. But Cross was prepared to accept the thing's guidance on his own terms and was saying so when the creature was rocked by four crossbow bolts thudding home in its chest. The killer was Jin . . .

Her actions made Mandrell angry, their only hope of a guide was dead, but Jin was unrepentant; the creature, she said, was a monster with only death in its mind – theirs.

During the next day the three seekers arrived at the edge of a vast, flat featureless plain. Cross stepped down onto it – and immediately began moving away from the edge and the others. But he was delighted, recognising that this was a sophisticated transport system. Jin and Mandrell joined him, and together they all moved away from 'land' towards the distant centre where a gravity 'whirlpool' carried them vertically down into the vast lit underground hall of an ancient space port.

Down some less well lit passages, they came across a hangar bay packed with the essential fuel cells Cross had been hoping to find. And they also discovered a flier, old but waiting to be used. With the fuel loaded, Cross powered up the vehicle and flew fast, back towards the gravity vortex in an attempt to escape the port.

At full speed, to overcome its downward force, the vehicle hurtled at it, through the sharp bend and up. But something was coming down, something hideous and – splat. The re-animated body of Karrian was smeared over the flier's windshield. To their horror the ruined figure started speaking, telling them that nothing could kill Karrian, it was he who brought his friend death to others . . .

The flier hurtled up out of the gravity vortex with Karrian incredibly still clinging to its windshield. But before the monster could start clawing his way in at them, Cross handed control over to Mandrell, and clambered outside to engage Karrian in a scrabbling fight.





By this time the flier's speed had carried them back over the city of Kebwob. Cross and Karrian battled, precariously poised on the roof of the craft, high above the spider web of streets. Cross caught his opponent off balance, but clinging to Cross, Karrian pulled him over the edge so that they both tumbled towards the ground.

Mandrell put the flier into a steep dive and screamed down after Cross, matching speed with his falling mass, so that Jin could reach out and pull him in. They just managed in time before Mandrell had to pull out of the dive to avoid the ground.

Back aboard, Cross ordered Mandrell straight to the towering Cathedral, and in through its massive doors. The flier stopped at the high altar and, getting out, Cross told Jin to load fuel cells into the 'sacrifice' chamber, where he was sure they would fit perfectly into slots provided. Meanwhile he lifted a stone slab off the altar top to revel a complex of controls beneath. The Cathedral itself was Vilgarre's starship!

As Jin completed her task, Vilgarre arrived with guards and the Arcadia's survivors. The despot was furious. He wanted a space ship and Cross had brought him a flying cart. Smiling grimly, Cross pressed a control which caused devices all over the Cathedral to glow and crackle with power. Vilgarre's guards started fleeing in terror before their Gods' wrath.

Amidst the growing panic, a terrifying voice cried out to Cross. It was Karrian and he had unfinished business . . .

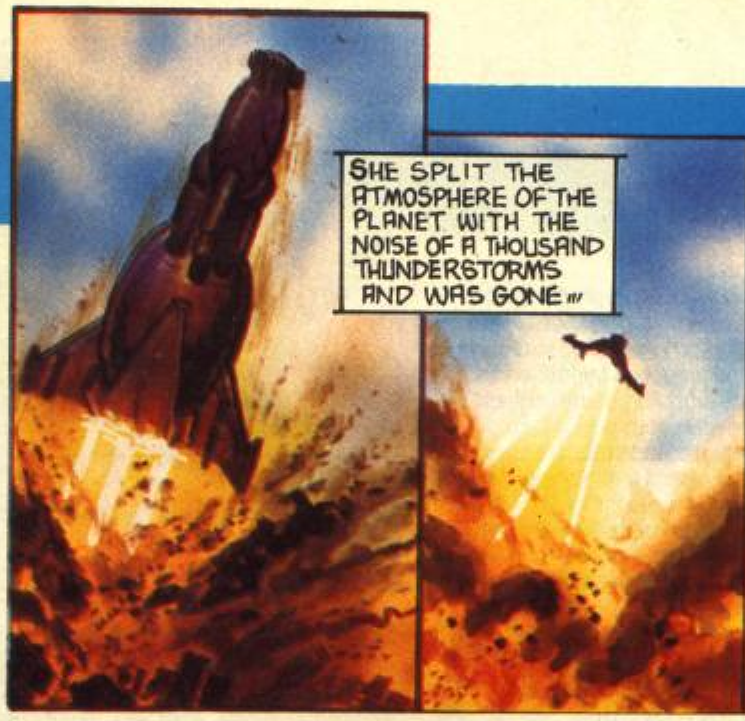
Vilgarre had his starship, his dream of empires in the sky was nearly











realised – only Cross stood in his way. He shouted at Karrian, telling him to take Cross and his companions, and having killed them, he would grant Karrian the oblivion the creature craved.

As they struggled Cross told Karrian that Vilgarre lied, that only he, Cross, could really provide Karrian with painless oblivion.

Karrian sensed the truth in Cross, and turned on his master. Grabbing Jin viciously round the throat, Vilgarre pulled the girl before him as a shield.

But Karrian lashed out, knocked her aside unconscious, and grasped Vilgarre in a death hold. The despot had tricked him all along, used him in their obscene bargain as a bringer of death to Vilgarre's opponents. Now he killed Vilgarre, thrusting a sabre blade clean through the ruler of Kebwob.

Cross kept his bargain, and sent Karrian into the ship's anti-matter drive field, where the creature's atoms were painlessly scattered across a million universes, making it impossible for them to reform and bring back the immortal being.

Turning to Mandrell, Cross told the gambler that he must now leave them.



Earlier, Cross had discovered the ship's firing control was situated outside the 'Cathedral'. He preset the hyperspatial co-ordinates for Earth while Mandrell tried persuading him to remain with them. But Cross was still more machine than man, and he felt the need to be a machine again . . .

With the Arcadia's remaining passengers inside, Cross went to the nearby building where lay the ignition control, remotely sealed ship's doors and set it for take off. Within the vessel Jin recovered consciousness and realised that she had lost Cross forever.

As the great star ship strained to reach the sky, the silly clutter of bits and pieces that had been built on to her over aeons fell away. The mighty vessel powered off up into the sky like a thunderstorm, consuming wicked Kebwob in the fire of its leaving.

From the flames Cross strode away into the landscape, searching his component parts, a man's soul, virus and computer brain, his mission as Officer Cross completed. High on a spike of rock, far from anywhere, the Terminal Man finished . . .



To be Continued...

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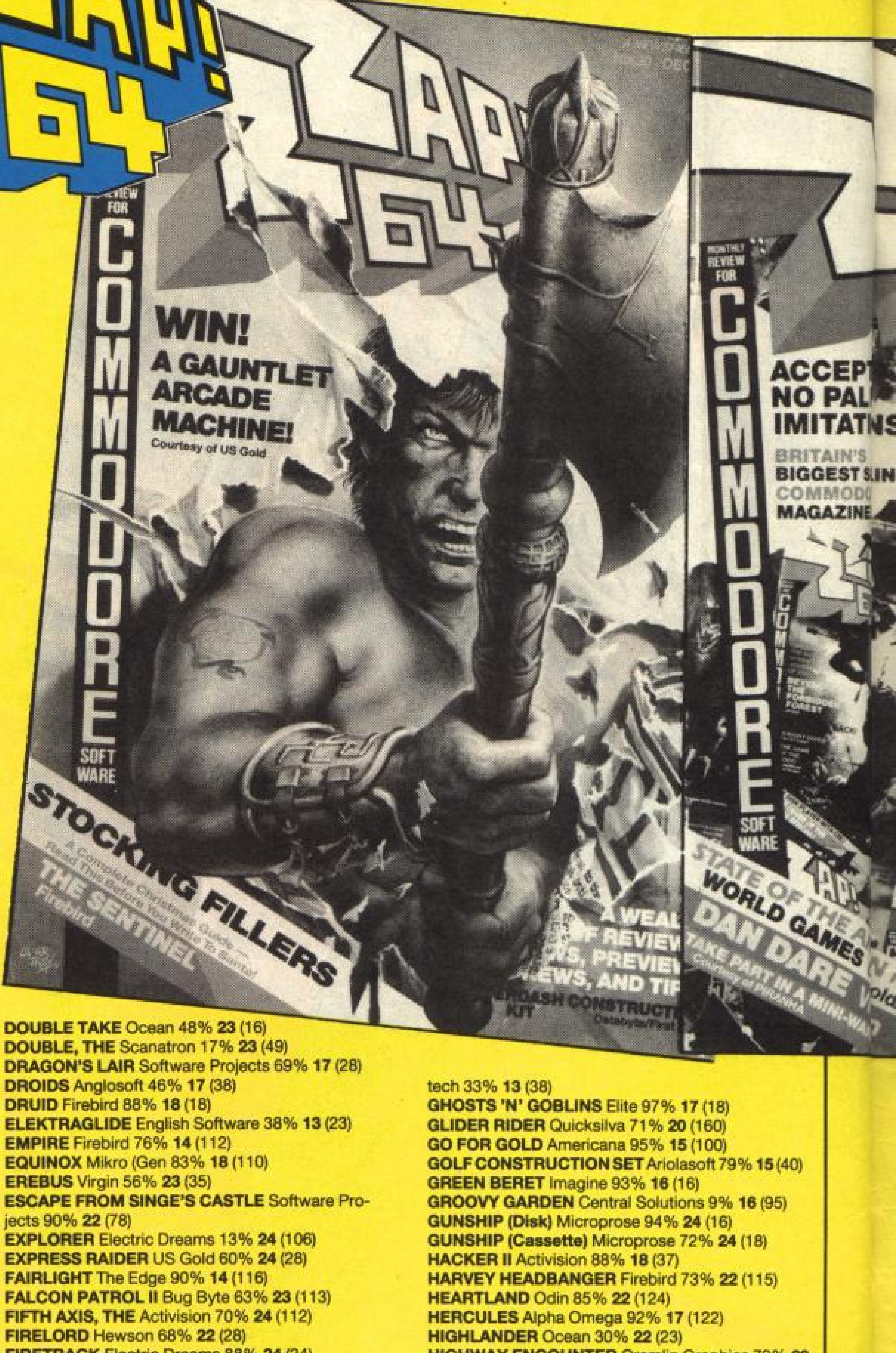
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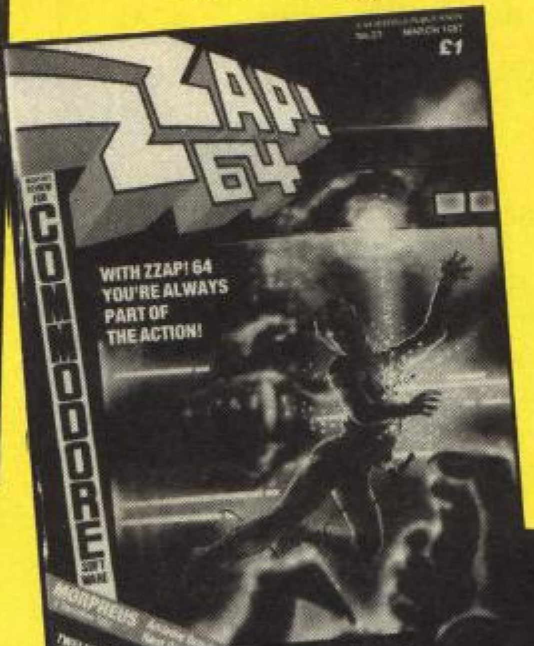


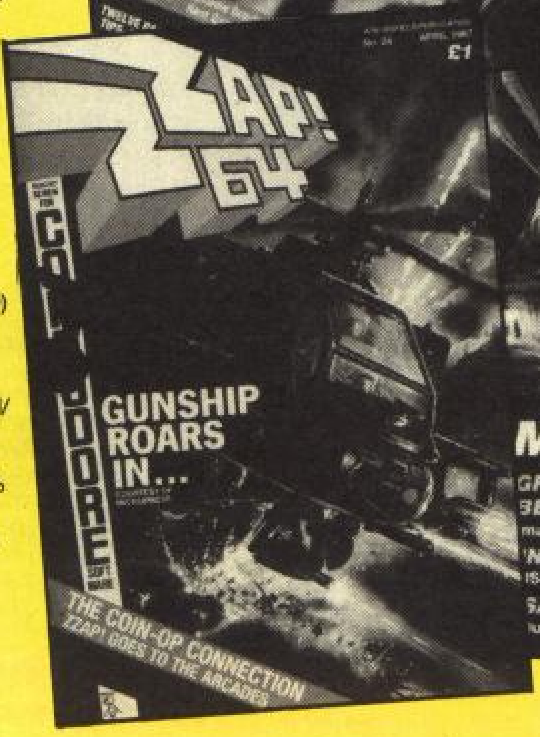
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